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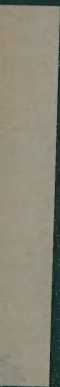
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George Dilnot
Author of 'Scotland Yard'

GEORGE DILNOT

author of 'Great Detectives and Their Methods,' claims to be the first man given unfettered facilities to study every detail of the work of Scotland Yard. An English journalist by profession, he knows London from East to West, and confesses to an absorbing interest in murder and other underhand arts. His 'History of Scotland Yard,' his novel 'The Lazy Detective,' and 'Great Detectives and their Methods' are popular additions to the literature of crime.

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GREAT DETECTIVES
AND THEIR METHODS



THE NEW "OLD BAILEY."

GREAT DETECTIVES AND THEIR METHODS

BY

GEORGE DILNOT

AUTHOR OF "SCOTLAND YARD," ETC.



Boston and New York

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TO
EDGAR WALLACE
FINEST OF FRIENDS

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GREAT DETECTIVES AND THEIR METHODS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING THE DETECTIVE

ONLY two things are certain about the real detective. He is as unlike Sherlock Holmes as he is different from the square-toed clodhopper displayed on the stage, on the films, and in books. Whether of Scotland Yard, of the Paris Sûreté, of Berlin, or of New York it is obvious neither from his manner nor appearance that he is a detective.

There are nine hundred men in the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard, and if you saw them together you would behold a greater diversity of types than you would in an assembly of barristers, bakers, or bricklayers. Froest, Wensley, Gough, Hawkins, Neil, Quinn, Melville—all the notable detective figures for many years past have all differed from the conventional conception, and from each other.

Nor is the detective any more a super-man than the average of the human race. If he had all the qualities that are popularly ascribed to him he would not be earning a few pounds a week as a police officer. He would be a millionaire at the head of some great industrial enterprise, a Harley Street specialist, a

famous scientist, the editor of a big newspaper—oh, a dozen things that would bring him fame and money.

The detective has few illusions about himself. Here is what John Wilson Murray, a level-headed officer who had a distinguished career in Canada, says :

“As a matter of fact the detective business is a plain, ordinary business, just like a lawyer’s business, a doctor’s business, or a railway manager’s business. It has its own peculiarities because it deals with crime, with the distorted, imperfect members of the social body, just as a surgeon’s business deals with the distorted, imperfect, diseased members of the physical body. But it is not an abnormal, or phenomenal, or incomprehensible business. There is nothing done in it, nothing accomplished by any detective, that is not the result of conscientious work, the exercise of human intelligence, and an efficient system of organization and inter-communication and good luck. A good detective must be quick to think, keen to analyze, persistent, resourceful, and courageous. But the best detective in the world is a human being, neither half-devil nor half-god, but just a man with the attributes that make him successful in his occupation.”

It does happen once in a great while that the detective and the criminal are pitted in a sort of duel staged with all of the high lights of melodrama. But that is infrequent. The detective in most cases gives proof of his capacity not by doing every mortal thing himself, but rather by intelligent use of the machine. That must be so. When Arthur Neil ran down Smith, the “Brides-in-the-Bath” murderer, investigations

had to be made in over forty towns, statements taken from one hundred and fifty witnesses, and twenty bank accounts had to be examined. All this quite apart from the medical investigations.

There is really little mystery about detective work. In its simplest form it is nothing more than spying—I do not use the word in any disparaging sense. In its highest form it calls for qualities of intelligence and resource which are brought into play every day by alert business men, but the circumstances of drama occasionally lift them from the prosaic and present them in sharp relief.

Jesse Blocher, an American detective, had traced a wanted man to a certain big hotel. He did not wish to disclose his identity till he was sure of his quarry. Therefore he wrote a note, using the supposed alias of the fugitive, put it in a bright red envelope, and dropped it on the counter of the reception clerk. A little later he saw that note in box No. 420, and he knew immediately which room was occupied by his man.

You will, of course, get little dramatic strokes here and there, but often they are the result of plain common sense. These men are not astute because they are police officers. They would have had just the same brains in any other profession.

There was a case in which Frank Froest, one of the most famous of Scotland Yard men, was concerned. An unknown man had been found head downwards in a water-butt outside a country bungalow. There was an ugly wound on his forehead, and it looked like murder. Froest went down and looked over the scene.

“This is not a matter of murder,” he said. “That man was a tramp. He hurt his head in climbing through the fence—he was probably going to break into the house—and went to bathe it in the water-butt. As he put his head down he slipped, over-balanced, and fell in.”

One of the listeners heard this explanation sceptically. “That couldn’t be so,” he protested, and, going near the water-butt, lowered his head to show the impossibility of such an accident. The next instant there was a smothered scream, a mighty splash, and a pair of feet waved wildly in the air. Froest’s theory had been demonstrated.

I am inclined to classify police detectives into three broad types, although each type may have in more or less degree the characteristics of the others.

The Executive Organizer.—A man who can meet the unexpected, can handle events as they arise. He has the tactics, the full technique of criminal investigation at his fingertips, a supreme knowledge of men, an elasticity of resource. He knows where to get information and how to apply it.

The Thief-taker.—A shrewd and experienced man whose chief asset is his knowledge of thieves and their methods.

The Expert.—Not necessarily a highly educated man, but skilled in some direction—finger-prints, photography, footprints, record keeping.

For practical purposes the latter of these can scarcely be defined as a detective. He is a consultant almost entirely.

In the first class fall those very, very few who

most nearly conform to the conception of a detective in the minds of the public. These are the men who get to the bottom of first-class crimes that are out of the usual. They are the detectives who are capable of some intricate feat of deduction. They have versatility and are not wedded to hard and fast methods. They have all the knowledge of the thief-taker and something beyond. But they are not common, and they are not fools enough to believe themselves omniscient.

No one of these would pretend to be able to sit in an office and pick out the author of a burglary a hundred miles away by pure reason. If anyone does that sort of thing it is more likely to be a bored clerk who from a card index has discovered that the crime has all the special characteristics of the work of Bill Brown, long known as a thief.

These detectives have their little vanities, but they also have a sense of proportion. They know that in general, as a shrewd observer has put it, "crimes are solved not by monumental intelligence, not by the pursuit of obscure theories or the use of occult devices, but by the plodding performance of a large number of men, each working upon some minute detail in the large pattern of crime detection, and each finding innocent little facts that piece together damnably before a jury."

Imagination may, in fact, be a drawback to a detective unless he is a very exceptional man. There are general principles of criminal investigation tested by long experience, and improved by scientific organization, to which it is wise to work. In ninety-nine cases

out of a hundred the obvious explanation of a crime is the right one. It is in the hundredth case that formulæ fail, and it is then that individual skill and suppleness of mind are tested.

A tradesman had sent some money to be paid into his bank. The bank cashier admitted that a blue pencil initial in the paying-in book was his, but he could not recall receiving the money, nor could it be traced.

"I seemed to be at a dead end," said the detective-inspector who told me this story. "I hadn't the faintest idea who was the culprit. There was nothing to go upon at all. Then, one day as I was leaving the tradesman's office, I happened to glance in the window of a stationer's tiny shop opposite. I noticed a heap of blue pencils. They gave me an idea, and I went in and questioned the old woman who kept the shop. She told me that schoolboys were her best customers for these pencils, and I managed to get from her that the son of the tradesman had recently bought some.

"Off I went to the grammar school at which I knew the boy to be. From his master I learned that the lad was fond of drawing. That was enough. I had the boy out, and a little questioning soon got the truth out of him. He had been supposed to take the money to the bank, had forged the initials in the paying-in book, and while he was believed to be staying with an aunt had gone on a spree with a friend."

The second-class, the thief-takers, must necessarily predominate in any police detective service. You will find them sometimes in high rank, for, spite of their limitations, they are of great value in checking the

flood of crime. But more often they do not get very far, because they are perfectly happy and unambitious, or because they are at their best in their own environment. They know rogues and their habits from A to Z, but, as I have said, they have limitations. On the other hand, in their own districts they can often be more successful than the most brilliant outsider, for the simple reason that they know everybody, and are trusted, and know whom to trust. Many Scotland Yard veterans will recall John Ottway, a fine example of this type. He served in the Borough about the time that this was one of the most dangerous districts in London. Always unarmed, of no special physical powers, he kept in touch with the worst quarters of his district, and no one raised a hand against him. His memory for faces was encyclopædic. If a stranger appeared he soon knew all about him, and thus many a criminal who had fled to the Borough for refuge was captured.

The official conception of a detective is worth quoting. This little extract is taken from the *Police Code* which is produced at Scotland Yard :

“The unravelment of crime must necessarily depend in a very great measure upon the energy, the ability, the judgment, and the integrity of the detective force.

“The work is more varied, interesting, and better paid than the ordinary street duty; the officer is brought into contact with a greater variety of persons, and is more prominently before his superiors and the public. It is of the utmost importance that the duties should only be undertaken by men who have a

voluntary inclination for them, and who have given proof of skill and powers of observation while on beat or point duty, for without genuine perseverance and zeal they cannot be performed.

“ Detective officers should especially beware against the improper arrogation of individual credit ; and if they have any information which may secure the arrest of a criminal, they should communicate it to the officer who is placed in a position to work it out instead of reserving it for themselves.

“ Above all, they should remember that it is far better to let ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent person should be falsely accused.

“ Everyone is liable to make mistakes, and an error should be freely acknowledged and apologized for the instant it is discovered ; for sooner or later the truth is certain to come out, and it may then be too late to repair it.

“ Detectives must necessarily have informants, and be obliged to meet them when and where they can. But the public-house should not be used more than is necessary. Needless to say, where information is given under a promise of confidence, the promise must be strictly respected.

“ A detective should keep his own counsel, hear everything others have to say, but draw his own conclusions ; follow out every channel which may possibly lead to the discovery of the truth, and be slow to adopt or give expression to positive theories ; and above all not communicate mere suspicions to anyone.

“ In the course of his duties he is bound to receive much information of a confidential character. If he

INTRODUCING THE DETECTIVE

allows himself to disclose anything of the kind to private persons he is entirely unqualified for his post.

“Lastly, he should realize that he will never be successful unless he gains the confidence not only of the respectable part of the community but also that of the criminal classes with whom he has to deal, which is only to be obtained by scrupulously fair dealing with them.”

CHAPTER II

DETECTIVES AS HUMAN BEINGS

IT is one of the tricks of the detective story-writer to give his hero some mannerism, some human trait, that contrasts with his wonderful grasp of the sum of knowledge, and brings him down momentarily to earth. Now the feet of the real detective touch the earth all the time. There is very little difference between the Scotland Yard man and the rest of us apart from our professions.

You should hear my friend, Chief Inspector —, sing the praises of his wife, whom he married thirty years ago, and with whom he is still in love. Or Chief Inspector —, now chicken farming down in Hampshire, on the merits of Buff Orpingtons as against Speckled Sussex. Or get Inspector — to tell you of his boy now in the first rugger team of the junior school.

But they have their reticences. They will talk of some men they have sent to prison, but of others you will get scarcely a word. "Yes, I remember. He made a mistake. He pulled himself together after he came out of prison. His wife and kiddies are still alive. Why drag up the old story? I've forgotten all about it."

As a class detectives do not, as might be hastily assumed, become hardened and callous by their profession. One of the greatest chiefs of the Criminal In-

vestigation Department resigned to take up missionary work in India. Frank Froest is the honorary superintendent of a sanatorium down in Somerset. Sir William Gentle, some time a sergeant in the C.I.D., did notable charitable work among poor children while he was Chief Constable of Brighton. The late William Pinkerton dipped deeply into his purse to assist notable ex-criminals to run straight. Almost daily it is a commonplace to see revealed during court proceedings an act of real unostentatious charity performed by a detective, who blushes to find it known. Nor is it uncommon for these men to go out of their way to find an honest job for a convict on his discharge from prison.

An old and incorrigible crook was suspected to be concocting mischief. A young detective was sent to look him up. At the house he found drawn blinds and was received by a tearful wife. The old "lag" had been summoned before his last tribunal. He lay in a pauper's grave, and his widow had not so much left as would suffice to buy a few flowers for his last resting-place. The detective went away and, out of his small personal resources, bought a wreath, and had it sent to the widow ere he made his way back to file a report.

There was the sad case of a decent woman married to a criminal whose real character she did not suspect till after his arrest. She stripped herself of every penny of her small savings to pay for his defence. She was utterly destitute when he was convicted. Then it was that eight detectives, all of them strangers to her before the case, subscribed together a sum which was

sufficient to set her up in a business that enabled her to support herself.

Doubtless there are harsh detectives who take advantage of their positions. But they are few. The ordinary detective is a genial soul who does his duty as pleasantly as circumstances will allow. There is policy in this, but I prefer to think that this seldom enters their minds. A striking tribute was paid to a Scotland Yard man by Roger Casement before he was executed for high treason. He wrote :

“ DEAR SUPERINTENDENT ———,

“ Before I have the misfortune (as I will term it in truth) to be taken out of your custody on my journeys to and from this prison to Bow Street, I want to thank you very warmly and sincerely for your un-failing courtesy, manliness, and kindness to me. From the time you took me into custody at Euston on Easter Sunday, and again took me to the Tower on Easter Tuesday, you showed me the best side of an Englishman’s character—his native good heart. Whatever you may think of my attitude towards your Government and the Realm I would only ask you to keep one thing in that good heart of yours, and that is that a man may fight a country and its policy and yet not hate any individual of that country. . . .

“ I hope my feeling is something of that kind—at any rate I feel for you (and many others who have had charge of me since my arrest) that you have treated me in a wholly chivalrous and high-minded way, and I can only tell you that I thank you from the very bottom of my heart.

“ Yours very faithfully,
“ ROGER CASEMENT.”

Nothing indicates the human side of a man more

closely than his hobbies. They are as diverse among detectives as among other people, but in not a few cases you will find they are concerned with some collateral branch of their profession. Photography, for instance, is a favourite pastime, and some take up the study of languages. There is more than one competent artist in the ranks of the C.I.D., and stranger things have happened than that their works should be exhibited at the Royal Academy. A prominent member of the police minstrel troupe is a detective of senior rank. Golf, cricket, football, boxing, all claim adherents. I believe there is one ex-inspector who is making abstruse experiments in the cultivation of rare plants with the intention of ultimately writing a book. There is a sergeant who has become an authority on natural history, and keeps a miniature zoo in his back garden.

Amid the serious affairs of their calling most detectives retain a keen sense of humour. There are few better raconteurs than Frank Froest, and there are many men still in the service who can tell a good story. One of Froest's yarns which I recall ran somewhat in this manner. He had in his early days been responsible for a long sentence inflicted upon a dangerous criminal, and, as is not unusual, the latter had made violent threats of vengeance from the dock. The years passed and the convict was released. He ran across Froest in the Strand and shook him effusively by the hand.

"I suppose you are a sergeant now?" said the ex-convict.

"Better than that," replied Froest mildly.

“An inspector?”

“Better than that.”

“A chief inspector?”

“Better than that.”

“Ah—h’m—well,” observed the crook apprehensively, “I think I had better be going.”

In their own circle the practical joke is not unknown among detectives, and, though at times they may be crude, malice is rarely displayed. Half a dozen officers lured a notoriously penurious colleague to a dinner-party at an expensive restaurant. By methods known to them they “ran the rule” over him and, having ensured that his pockets were empty, slipped away one by one and left him to explain his identity and the joke to an incredulous manager.

More elaborate was the trick played on one of the shrewdest chief detective-inspectors at Scotland Yard a little before the war. This gentleman, whom I will call Mr. X, had a singular desire to step aside from his ordinary work and to distinguish himself as the guard of Royalty visiting England. Incautiously he confided his ambition to a couple of colleagues, and a plot was immediately hatched.

It was a day or two later that a subordinate officer, carefully coached, knocked at the door of the chief inspectors’ room and asked for a man known to be absent. “What do you want him for?” asked the victim, falling headlong into the trap.

The messenger thought that it was something to do with a Royal visit. Mr. Y had the papers. So X proceeded to Y and was allowed to inspect an application in the usual form for a senior detective to take a tour

of duty with the King of the Wallipugs. His next move was to apply to the C.I.D. superintendent. That astute gentleman scented a joke but gravely nodded his head. "The King of the Wallipugs, you say? Very well! When the papers reach me I'll not forget you."

This was quite good enough for X and he discussed his luck with his colleagues, who seemed to have a peculiarly intimate knowledge of the Wallipug kingdom. During the next week an official envelope reached X. It contained a list of the articles of dress necessary for an officer on duty with the Royal entourage. As these were of a type associated with the unsophisticated natives of the warmer parts of the earth X awoke to the hoax, and there was a bad quarter of an hour for all concerned in the business.

To a more practical purpose was the ingenuity of another wag put. Several London officers had been summoned to give evidence at a court in the provinces. As they expected that they would be held in waiting overnight they went to some expense and trouble in arranging a little river picnic, on the assumption that the court would adjourn at the usual hour of four. But the judge was a glutton for duty. It was announced during the afternoon that there would be a tea interval of half an hour at four o'clock, and that the court would then resume until its business was finished.

There were glum faces among the detectives, and one of the more resourceful of them vanished for a matter of minutes. On his return an usher was suddenly seized with a violent fit of sneezing. A minute

later two or three counsel had buried their faces in their handkerchiefs, and, in a little, the whole of the court, from the judge to the prisoner, were in the throes of the epidemic. Progress was impossible, and on the appeal of counsel, the court adjourned to the following day so that the place might be thoroughly cleaned. Meanwhile the local superintendent of police was instructed by the judge to discover who had dared to pollute a court of justice by scattering several ounces of snuff. He never reported anyone, and the detectives spent a jovial evening on the river.

Sometimes humour lies in the circumstances of an investigation. Consider the case of the gentleman who had as his share of a bank forgery some ten thousand pounds' worth of notes. His confederates scattered, and he himself took refuge at a West End hotel, where he registered as "Mr. Brown," and was given a room on the top floor of the building. There he determined to wait till things quietened down.

Time passed. "Mr. Brown" considered that the coast must be almost clear for a dash. Then one day a knock came at the door and a servant announced that a gentleman had arrived to see him. There was only one construction to be made. Scotland Yard had somehow got upon the scent. He retained presence of mind enough to order the visitor to be sent up, and as soon as the servant left the room he was on his hands and knees fumbling feverishly at his trunk. At all costs he must avoid being "found with the goods."

So ten thousand pounds' worth of crisp notes disappeared in a blaze up the chimney ere the visitor



CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR HAIGH.

was ushered in. He proved to be a little sallow-faced, timorous man, who was wearing a clerical collar.

"You will forgive me, Mr. Brown," he said, "I noticed your name in the hotel book, and as visitors here sometimes help us with the rebuilding fund of our little church opposite, I thought I would call upon you to see if you would care to subscribe."

"Mr. Brown's" answer, with the memory of ten thousand pounds eaten by the flames still fresh in his mind, is not recorded.

A not dissimilar case is recorded by Mr. George S. Dougherty, formerly head of the New York Detective Department. "I had a pickpocket before me as a suspect, and in the course of the interrogation I asked him what he had been doing all the summer. He had no reason to hide anything from me, as he knew that I knew him, and he told me he had been following a circus for months, and had had the most miserable luck. He had worked hard picking pockets, so that getting rid of purses and wallets was his only trouble.

"He raked in more than seventy pounds a day and sent it all to his sister to keep for him. She was living with their mother. He went home at the end of the circus season, and his mother and sister had stuffed turkey for him with a good dessert. When his mother left the room the pickpocket asked his sister: 'What about the dough?'

"'I thought you would probably ask about that,' said the sister, 'but I don't know whether you will approve of what I have done with it.'

"The girl went on to say that, as he was in a bad

and risky business, she had been to church, and she had decided, about a week or two before he came home, to pay for a saint's window in the church to be sure he was forgiven. The man told me that every time he looked up at that window he felt like throwing a brick."

There is another picture of the personal side of detective life. Direct tragedy is sometimes brought home to these men who have so much to do with the tragedies of other people. One of the straightest, cleanest men I ever knew, a chief inspector who could well expect promotion to the highest degree, was driven to his grave when his son was convicted of a mean offence. A somewhat similar case, yet staged more dramatically, has been related by ex-Chief Detective-Inspector Haigh.

"It occurred a good many years ago at the Lambeth Police Court. At that time the senior magistrate was the late Mr. Hopkins, a singularly able man possessed of a very human heart. The case before him was quite a simple one of petty theft. A lad in his teens was the prisoner, and the evidence was perfectly clear. The last witness to be called was an old detective, well known at the court, and whose word had never been doubted.

"Somehow, in spite of the simplicity of the case, the witness seemed remarkably hesitant in his reply to questions, and the magistrate noticed the fact. Once or twice he glanced at the officer somewhat impatiently. When the case for the prosecution closed the officer remained instead of leaving the witness box. The magistrate, glancing up, was astonished to

see this veteran in tears, and sensed something extraordinary.

“ ‘What is it?’ he asked.

“The reply was almost inaudible. ‘Sir, excuse me, I can’t help my feelings, but the prisoner is my son. Deal with him as kindly as you can, for I still love him.’

“There was a hurried adjournment to the magistrate’s room, and the prosecutor, the detective, and the magistrate returned to court each with suspiciously red eyes.”

Perhaps the greatest proof of the honesty of British detectives is that none of them die rich. Men who have held the highest posts in the Criminal Investigation Department leave a few hundred pounds. I have only known one wealthy ex-detective, and he married a rich woman. The fact is a very remarkable one when the temptations to which these men must be necessarily exposed are considered. There are people who have offered big sums, not for any active help, but for the mere shutting of eyes. And let it be remembered, too, that the official rewards for good service run rather to shillings than to pounds.

Opinions may differ on many of the qualities of the London C.I.D. man. But no two views can be held on the matter of cool pluck, which is traditional in the service. One officer with nothing but a cobbler’s iron overcame a ruffian who fired at him again and again with a revolver. Chief Constable Wensley, the present executive head of the C.I.D., when a detective-inspector, distinguished himself at

the siege of Sidney Street, where armed desperadoes held the police at bay for hours. One of his officers—Detective-Sergeant Leeson—was shot through the lungs while scrambling over a roof opposite to the house from which the assassins were firing. Wensley it was who ran back to carry the other to a place of safety.

Many years before, when Wensley was beginning his detective career, he was concerned in a desperate and dramatic struggle with a murderer named Seaman on the roof of an East End house. Seaman leapt to the pavement below and was seriously hurt before an arrest was made.

Some years ago a story was related in *The Times*. "An officer in plain clothes was informed by a woman of the unfortunate class, whom he had at one time befriended and endeavoured to reform, that a certain gang of notorious burglars and housebreakers were holding a meeting at a rendezvous of their own to divide up a great haul of stolen property. The information came to the officer just before the meeting was to take place. There was no time to communicate with his comrades. He had either to go then and there to the rendezvous alone and face ten or more notorious and desperate criminals, and trust to his informant's giving the alarm at the nearest station, to enable him ultimately to procure the help he would certainly need to secure the property and arrest the men, or to risk missing an opportunity which might never occur again. Yet in the best of circumstances he could not hope to get through without being severely injured by the infuriated thieves—

and for all he really knew he might simply be falling into a well-baited trap. As it happened he was aware that of late he had excited the bitterest hatred of certain well-known cracksmen, who would stick at nothing if they had him at a disadvantage. He took all the risks, however, and hastened to the house.

“On the way he was lucky enough to meet two constables in uniform. These he took with him, sending the woman off to the station for further aid. On reaching the house he gave the signal he had been told would procure him admittance, and when the latch of the door was lifted from inside he burst into the place, to find himself confronted, as he had been warned, with a dozen of the worst cracksmen in London, holding stolen property worth a considerable sum. For a moment the men were stunned by the apparition of the police when least expected or desired; and before they had recovered from the shock the detective had set a man in uniform against each of the two doors the room contained. This done, he coolly addressed each thief by name with the familiarity of an old friend, telling him that the game was up, and advising him to take things quietly and give no trouble for his own sake. It did not seem probable that the advice would be accepted. One of the constables present told us that he saw three men thrust their hands in their pockets, in which revolvers were afterwards found. If an attack had been made by such practised professionals, with the odds at twelve to three, it must have resulted in most of them getting away. But under the eye of the detective who knew them, the men seemed to lose all nerve and

presence of mind. Until the police came from the station in force the detective held these men in check as a lion tamer holds his beasts ; and without a finger being raised to resist him the men were taken into custody and the property seized by the police."

Tom Howard never became a great detective figure so far as the public were concerned. Yet the manner in which he first attracted the attention of the detective-inspector with whom he afterwards served is worth telling. He was then a uniformed constable.

A message came through to a police station that a constable was being murdered in a street notorious for its savage hatred of the police. Half a dozen men requisitioned a cab and rushed off to the spot. This was the thing they saw as described by an eye-witness.

"A seething mob of half-mad, half-drunken rowdies, hurling curses and anathemas at a solitary policeman who stood with his back to the railings. In his right hand he held the remnant of a truncheon, in the left a piece of iron railing. His helmet was gone, his tunic was in strips, his face was bloodmarked, and one eye blackened ; yet he was still smiling and holding the mob at bay. Around him in various stages of unconsciousness lay seven of his attackers.

"He became a detective officer and served under me in various parts of the Metropolis. His smiling urbanity never left him, and although he was, I believe, always at his best in a rough district, he did heaps of good work wherever he was present."

Few London detectives go armed, although they know that danger may lurk in the most prosaic

and commonplace case. A detective-sergeant named Joyce was sent to arrest a milk roundsman who had been pilfering. He went to the offender's lodgings and was directed to a room. Three minutes later he was killed by a bullet fired at close range as he opened a door.

CHAPTER III

THE WAYS OF DETECTIVES

“TELL me,” said a lawyer friend of mine who has a large criminal practice, “how a murderer’s guilt was proved, and I will tell you which of the Big Five at Scotland Yard was in the case.”

This was exaggeration ; but it contained more than a germ of truth. For as criminals have their individual ways, so have the bigger detectives. One man will use the rapier, another the bludgeon. One will elicit a confession, another will laboriously piece together, bit by bit, a net of damning evidence. One will follow a trail, in all its painful convolutions, as pertinaciously as a weasel, another will out-think a criminal and jump him by a short cut.

Laws and regulations there must, of course, be for the protection of the unjustly suspected. But there are times when these rules, however admirable in the abstract, are damnably embarrassing to a conscientious detective. It is to be doubted if there has ever existed an officer of ability who has not at some time or other had to step outside the extreme limit of legality in the wider interests of justice. Each time that he does so his career stands in jeopardy. Melville, of the Special Branch, was flagrantly wrong in the eyes of the law when he lured an Anarchist, whom he suspected of a murderous plot, into a wine cellar and locked him there during a State procession. Froest more than

once risked international complications by his audacity. But a nice discrimination is necessary in this sort of thing.

A Newcastle detective named Morrison was sitting before a fire with a colleague in a police station when an excited sixteen-year-old lad rushed in. He had been left by his employer to put the money drawn for the men's pay on the day following in the office safe. According to his story he was about to lock up when two men entered. They turned the lights down, threw the boy on the floor, bound and gagged him, and then rifled the safe of between forty and fifty pounds in gold and silver. He described the men with some particularity, and Morrison thrust a poker absently between the bars of the grate. It was red-hot by the time the lad finished his story. The detective took it out and examined it. He advanced threateningly upon the youth.

"Have you any more lies to tell, or is that the lot?" he asked.

The youth recoiled. "It's not lies, sir. It's all true," he gasped.

Morrison thrust the poker forward. "Tell me this moment where the money is, you young blackguard," he ordered, "or I'll murder you."

"In the water this side of the suspension bridge," gasped the terrified lad.

The boy was led to the place, and in an hour or two all the money was recovered.

It is well to remember, in the words of the Hon. Trevor Bigham, who was for long associated with the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland

Yard, that "at least nine-tenths of the work of the police consists of trying to find out who committed a crime, without any data whatever, and they have to resort to methods which can scarcely be called scientific." That does not mean that science is barred. In fact it is really called in in some degree in almost every crime. But science is not a universal panacea, and never can be. Still, every detective is supposed to know something of the principles. As Dr. Hans Gross puts it: "The trace of a crime discovered and turned to good account, a correct sketch be it ever so simple, a microscopic slide, a deciphered correspondence, a photograph of a person or object, a tattooing, a restored piece of burnt paper, a careful survey, a thousand more material things, are all examples of incorruptible, disinterested and enduring testimony from which mistaken, inaccurate, and biassed perceptions, as well as evil intention, perjury and unlawful co-operation are excluded. As the science of criminal investigation proceeds, oral testimony falls behind and the importance of realistic proof advances. 'Circumstances cannot lie'; witnesses can and do. The upshot is that when the case comes for trial we may call as many witnesses as we like, but the realistic or, as the lawyers call them, the circumstantial proofs must be collected, compared, and arranged beforehand so that the chief importance will attach not so much to the trial itself as to the preliminary inquiry."

All knowledge may, in fact, be useful to a detective, but in practice no detective can know everything. The investigation of crime cannot be as absolute

as a game of chess, where certain results follow certain moves. Methods must be adapted to circumstances.

Some time ago the late Lord Rothschild was pestered by a blackmailer. The present Superintendent Hawkins of Scotland Yard was consulted, and arranged a trap.

Five hundred pounds in notes was to be placed in an aperture of a wall in the cloakroom of a well-known hotel. This was done, and to the notes Hawkins attached a wire which communicated with an electric alarm in a near-by room. He also devised a scheme by which anyone touching the notes should find his hands covered with powder scraped from an indelible pencil. At the expected time the bell rang and the detective rushed to the cloakroom. An agitated man was trying to wash the powder from his hands, with the result that the more water he applied the more pronounced the ink-stains became. There was no trouble in getting a conviction.

When the late Chief Inspector Mercer handled the case at Eastbourne in which two young men named Field and Gray were ultimately convicted as the murderers of Irene Munro, he first questioned the suspects and then let them apparently alone. But, in fact, they were under the constant surveillance of a young girl relative of his until the time was ripe for their arrest. It was Mercer, too, who played a great part in unravelling the complicated threads of fraud woven by Horatio Bottomley in his financial transactions.

One thing leads to another in detective work. A

typical method may be given. Two smooth gentlemen called on a Manchester tobacconist and offered to sell him a quantity of fine cigars at an excessively cheap price. They had a very plausible story, and were willing that the cigars should be examined in bulk before the money was paid. The tobacconist was willing, and made, as he thought, a careful examination of the goods. In fact, by a sleight of hand trick, while his attention was distracted, he saw just as much as they wished him to see. After he had paid them a large sum in cash—they insisted upon cash—and they had departed, he found that the greater part of the stuff was rubbish. He had had a variation of the old American “green goods” trick worked upon him. The late Chief Inspector Henderson was called in. This officer noticed that the brand on the bundles of cigars had been beautifully executed, and that the printing alone must have cost the swindlers a considerable sum. From this he inferred that they intended a wide campaign, since it would scarcely have been worth their while to have spent so much for one solitary coup. So he sent a circular round the country, and tobacconists and cigar merchants were warned by the police in every district. A day or so afterwards two men were arrested in Birmingham, where a similar trick had been frustrated by the notification. Henderson went to Birmingham, and on searching the men discovered envelopes addressed to a house in Commercial Road, Deptford. So he got in touch with Scotland Yard, and made his way to London. There he found that the house was occupied by a respectable man who added to his income by

letting lodgings. A raid was made, a confederate who tried to use a knife knocked down and handcuffed, and a fourth man arrested while unsuspectingly entering the house. Three cab loads of "stock-in-trade" were secured, and the four were duly convicted.

The late John Moss, a City of London detective, once played a quite illegal trick on a receiver who posed as a respectable general merchant. A man was employed to break into the latter's warehouse and move goods from one place to another, thus creating the illusion of a burglary. The receiver gave no sign until the trick had been repeated on three occasions. Then he reported the "robbery" to the police.

This was just what Moss wanted, for it gave him access to the warehouse. There a search brought to light a large quantity of stolen goods, and further valuables were later found at the receiver's house. He was arrested and sent to twenty years' penal servitude.

All the scientific and mechanical devices of all the detective bureaux in the world have not yet eliminated certain old-fashioned methods. Finger-prints, "Modus Operandi," and all the rest of it are more spectacular, but when you get down to the bones of ordinary detective work you will find that as often as not an arrest is made because somebody has "talked."

There is no such thing as honour among thieves except when it is dictated by some motive of self-interest or self-preservation. Bill Brown will quite cheerfully "shop" Jim Jones if he is approached in the right way. But of course, Bill must have con-

fidence in the man in whom he confides. So the detective makes it his business to be on familiar—but not too familiar—terms with the underworld. He will give and take a drink, exchange a jest, but both sides understand the game. Business is business. It is a curious relationship which sometimes brings about odd results. A good many years ago a criminal who felt himself under some obligation to a particular detective called at Scotland Yard and asked for that officer without disclosing his business. He went away when told that the other was out. Not till weeks later, after the C.I.D. had put in quite an amount of hard work, did it appear that he had wished to surrender himself to his “friend” for a murder which was being investigated.

I would not have you suppose that information flows automatically to detectives in this fashion. There is frequently just as much cleverness in finding and inducing the right people to talk as there is in more melodramatic ways of criminal investigation. The murder at Muswell Lodge is supposed to be a classic instance of great detective work. And so it was, but in a different, or rather additional, way to that generally associated with it.

The story will be remembered. An old man living in a lonely house at Muswell Hill had been found brutally murdered by thieves who had ransacked the house. The first real clue came from a young detective, who noticed that a scallawag, named Milsom, was missing from his usual haunts. This led to the discovery that a violent ruffian, one Fowler, who had been associating with Milsom, had also disappeared.

Then someone wrote a few words on half a sheet of notepaper and sent it to the police. The writer suggested that a visit should be paid to a certain house where a little boy had lost a toy. That house was where Milsom had lived, and the little boy indicated was his brother-in-law. The boy was permitted to see the lantern as if by accident, and at once claimed it. Then the two fugitives were traced by watching the mail letters received by Milsom's wife. Observe that the informant was never mentioned at the trial. Observe also that it would have been possible to bring the crime home to both the men without the lantern. That merely made it easier.

I have already mentioned Detective-Sergeant Ottway. He was in charge of a case in which a little girl of five was found murdered in a wood on the outskirts of London. She had been killed with a brick. There was no mark on her clothing that would help to identify her. No child was reported missing.

Ottway travelled doggedly day after day round the neighbourhood, making inquiries until he found a woman in a little cottage who recognized the clothing as that of the daughter of a woman who had once lodged with her. What had become of the pair she did not know. All that she could tell was that the woman had been in the habit of going away occasionally to meet her "husband," and that when she returned she always brought with her a large bunch of lilies of the valley.

Now, within a few miles was a district where the growing of lilies of the valley was quite an industry. Ottway turned his attention to this district. One by

one the officer visited all the principal growers. He found at one nursery that bunches of the flower were occasionally given to a carman, who said that he wanted them for his sweetheart.

Ottway concentrated his attention on this man. He was ascertained to be a widower who had recently married again. The woman whose lodger had disappeared was brought over to have a look at the carman's new wife. She at once identified her. The remainder of the case was simple. It was shown that the woman had killed the baby, as she feared that it might be an impediment to her marriage with the carman.

Obviously there are frequently bits of investigation during which the detective desires to keep his identity as a police officer secret. Not always does this mean that he must resort to disguise. His person may be entirely unknown to those he suspects. But there are times when, in order to acquire evidence, he must lull the suspicions and evade the vigilance of his quarry. In such cases he does not resort to false beards, wigs, or greasepaint. That kind of disguise is much too risky. But he does don different clothes. Uncombed hair, unshaven and dirty face, and greasy overalls work a wonderful alteration in some men.

I wonder if Chief Constable Wensley has forgotten the occasion when he rigged himself out as a guardsman to obtain admittance to a gambling den much frequented by soldiers. When the police outside knocked at the door he spread his arms about the money on the table, and under the misconception that he was a thief half a dozen sticks were brought into

use by the frequenters of the place to dust the tight jacket that adorned his broad shoulders.

A receiver lived in a certain private house at Islington Green. His outposts were so cunningly posted that it was impossible for anyone resembling a detective to get near him without warning. Yet the C.I. men felt that it was necessary to have him under close observation for a while in order that the precise extent and nature of his business might be known.

So a detective became a hot-potato vendor and established a pitch within a few yards of the receiver's house. Within a month he had seen enough to warrant a raid. "While we were raiding the place," said one officer who took part in the affair, "the receiver's friends had raided the hot-potato can, and seized all the potatoes, with which they bombarded us as we left the place with our prisoner."

A somewhat similar ruse was adopted in another receiving case, in which a man was suspected of dealing in stolen bales of cloth and silk. The two men watching him were convinced that he was in possession of goods stolen from a river warehouse, but could not be certain until they had a look over his premises. The difficulty was to get in without doing anything illegal.

The receiver chanced to own several cats to whose wants he attended himself. This suggested an idea, and one detective spent several hours in vocal practice of a novel sort. Then one morning—I quote ex-Chief Inspector Gough—"the detective walked up to the gate in the railings at the front of the short garden before the man's house, and, with a mimicry that suggested he had missed his vocation, he called :

“ ‘ Me-e-e-at ! Ca-a-ts me-e-e-at ! ’ ”

“ The fellow rushed out to the pavement. As he dashed out of the front gate the detective’s colleague, a big, burly fellow, who was purposely dressed to look like a policeman in plain clothes, walked to the step and halted in front of the open gate. The fence, realizing that some queer game was afoot, whirled round to be confronted by the obvious officer in plain clothes.

“ For a moment he seemed rooted to the spot. Then he hurled himself at the man by the gate, with the intention of knocking him out of the way and getting back into the house. The detective being heavy—and every movement of the whole thing having been planned—was only pushed by the man into the front garden, and the fence, in his agitation, crowned the scheme by shoving the officer right into the house. Once in, the rest was simple. The stolen silk was discovered, and the receiver was awarded his deserts at the Old Bailey.”

To Constable Giles, of Pine Creek, New South Wales, belongs the credit of perhaps the most ingenious disguise on record. He had been detailed to arrest a black man for murder, and with one black boy as companion started on the trail on foot.

For hundreds of miles he followed his man. At last his clothing was worn out, and he decided to proceed naked, with his skin blackened like that of a native. For many weeks the native sweet potatoes were his only food, but doggedly he held on until he finally reached the camp where the fugitive was hidden.

He was not recognized, but his position was not one in which he could observe nice formalities. Walking

straight up to the outlaw, he struck him violently on the head with a stick. The man fell senseless and the other aborigines fled. So Giles brought his captive safely back to gaol.

Ex-Chief Detective-Inspector Haigh once masqueraded as a blind beggar, to the fierce resentment of the man he ultimately arrested, who had made a point of dropping a coin in the "blind man's" hat "for luck" every time he passed. But possibly the most subtle disguise ever adopted by a police officer was that of a former detective-inspector, William Eustace. The men of whom he wanted to acquire information were so shy that they suspected every person, male or female, who loitered in the vicinity of the house which was their retreat. Ordinary attempts at "observation" were likely to do more harm than good. Now it happened that close to the spot was a constable's fixed point, but so usual was the presence of the uniformed officer that the thieves had come to regard him as part of the scenery. So Eustace reverted to the uniform of a constable, and held his vigil without arousing the slightest suspicion. He got his evidence.

Eustace found disguise useful in another case. Some thieves had broken into St. George's Cathedral at Southwark, and then rifled the Bishop's Palace. The booty they secured was worth some three thousand pounds, and they left not the faintest trace behind. The inspector took a long shot. He dressed himself—I quote a newspaper report—"in a long overcoat and slouched hat, sported a heavy chain, smoked a big cigar, and was well supplied with

money." In this attire he made himself conspicuous about Vauxhall. Among the crooks of that neighbourhood it soon became known that a Jew receiver—one Cohen, of Brick Lane, Whitechapel—was about, and in a very short while the "receiver" had picked up enough information to enable him to arrest the thieves and recover the stolen property.

A quaint device was resorted to by Viennese detectives a few years back. A thief had robbed Lady Cunningham, the wife of a former British military attaché in Vienna, of her jewels, by climbing to her window and hooking the gems from her dressing-table through a grating.

Jewellers who bought the stolen gems were able to afford a description. A man resembling the thief was reported to be a patron of a little barber's shop in one of the suburbs of Vienna. To watch for the suspect it was arranged that the entire detective force of this district should take it in turns to be shaved by the barber, so that there should always be at least one in the shop. This went on for two whole days. At last the man appeared, was arrested on suspicion, and confessed.

Not always does the disguised detective succeed in escaping discovery. One of the very few failures in the career of the late Chief Detective-Inspector Kane happened in this connection. A Chinaman, ostensibly a lodging-house and restaurant keeper, was suspected of dabbling in the opium traffic. Kane, in the habit of a sailor, got in the place, and sat in an outer room keeping his eyes and ears open. He waited patiently for a long time. Then the almond-eyed Celestial glided

up to him. "You seem lonely out here, Mr. Kane," he observed. "Won't you join the company in the next room? I have some really good cigarettes."

"I nearly fell off my chair," said Kane, telling the story later.

CHAPTER IV

DETECTION AND SCIENCE

BEHIND the police detective are those scientific specialists whose occasional activities touch the imagination of the public, the more especially in cases of murder. In London these are men of distinguished attainments who are retained by the Home Office. In many Continental countries there are deliberately designed scientific sections of police who are called upon as a matter of routine as part of the machinery of criminal investigation.

It is possible to over-estimate the scientific side of detection. In a small proportion of cases the scientist is indispensable, but the finest brains in the most splendidly equipped laboratories will never abolish the man who has to do the spadework—the ordinary detective. For, although many men have been sent to the gallows on some minute point of scientific evidence, there have been very few who have been traced in such a way. In practice certain points crop up which are submitted to a specialist in exactly the same way that a knotty point of law is submitted to a legal adviser.

It may have been that Smith, who made a habit of drowning women in baths, would have escaped but for the labours of Sir Bernard Spilsbury ; but he would certainly never have been brought to the notice of the pathologist but for Superintendent Arthur Neil. No

one recognizes more clearly than Sir Bernard Spilsbury the place of the expert in the investigation of crime. As he has himself said : " The investigation of crime is becoming so complicated and extensive, in view of the application of various kinds of special methods, that it is obvious that all criminal investigations must be carried out by means of team work, different men undertaking different branches of the subject."

There is no man who has had greater experience than Sir Bernard Spilsbury on the scientific aspects of criminal investigation. One curious episode in which he was concerned has all the elements of a mystery story.

In one of the camp huts at Aldershot a soldier was found dead after a rifle shot had been heard. An inquest was held. No post-mortem was thought necessary, and a verdict of suicide was recorded. The body was buried. It was after this that suspicions against another occupant of the hut were aroused, and he was arrested while investigation took place. The dead man had been found lying on his back covered with bed-clothes, and there was a bullet wound through his left cheek. A service rifle was lying by the bed. Now, by the nature of the wound, death, or at any rate paralysis, must have been instantaneous. Certain points were worked out. The dead man was a fraction more than five feet, seven inches tall, and the rifle from the muzzle to the trigger was three and a half feet long. It was possible to estimate by the blackening round the wound how many inches away the weapon was when fired. Thus it was shown that the

dead man could not possibly have pulled the trigger with his finger. Nor could the rifle have been discharged by his foot pressing the trigger, for paralysis would have prevented him replacing his foot under the bedclothes. Thus it was demonstrated that suicide was out of the question, and the arrested man was ultimately found guilty of murder.

A strand of hair has played a significant part in many cases. Some years ago in Marseilles a man was murdered, and the only trace left behind by the assassin was one solitary hair. The French doctor who examined the victim found it by the merest chance, and having studied it for a while told the police to look for a negro who had had a haircut and shampoo on the day of the crime. Every hairdresser in the city was interviewed, and eventually the murderer was tracked down and in due course convicted.

In regard to hairs, Sir Bernard Spilsbury says : "Three or four years ago I came across an interesting example of that mode of investigation in connection with a crime in which a young married woman was found dead in a country lane with her throat cut. Her husband was charged with being the cause of her death, and at the husband's lodgings was found a bloodstained razor belonging to him, on which were certain hairs. The murdered woman was found wearing a necklet which had been cut by the weapon used, and when the hairs on the razor were compared with the hairs on the fur, they were found to be microscopically identical. That also threw light on the way in which the murder had been committed, because the necklet must have been cut through by

the razor after the razor had made the wound in the neck, and when it was moist with blood; the hairs would therefore adhere to it."

Some time back there was a train robbery in Southern California, and three railway officials were killed. A pair of greasy overalls, with some electric batteries which had been used to explode a charge of dynamite under the train, on which were fingerprints, were the only clues. The batteries were traced to a garage some miles away, and an ex-convict employed there as a mechanic, whom the overalls happened to fit, was arrested. The overalls were sent to Professor Heinrichs, of the University of Berkeley, for examination.

He found that the supposed grease on the garments was really spruce fir pitch, and from that he deduced a lumber camp. The dust in the pockets under a microscope resolved itself into bits of Douglas fir needles, finger-nail cuttings, tiny pine chips, and bits of leaves and red soil common only in one part of Western Oregon. Hair caught on a button was found to be dark brown.

From these facts Professor Heinrichs drew up the following description :

"The man who wore the overalls was a left-handed, white lumber-jack, brown-haired, probably dark-eyed, of medium height, rather stockily built, fastidious, about twenty-five years old, and he comes from a certain town in Western Oregon."

Thus the innocence of the ex-convict was demonstrated. Inquiries were made in the Oregon town indicated, and a man with characteristics described

by the professor was found. His finger-prints were discovered to be identical with those on the batteries. Subsequent investigation disclosed that his three brothers had been concerned with him in the raid.

The French have always had a flair for scientific methods of criminal investigation. In one case which came before the Sûreté an important question was, whether an axe which had been used to kill a woman had been cleaned by a piece of newspaper or by a cloth. If it had been cleaned by a cloth the murder was the work of one man. If it had been cleaned by a newspaper it was the work of another. The axe was sent by the public prosecutor to the laboratory. It was put under a microscope, then treated with a chemical. The result was clear proof that the deadly weapon had been wiped with a piece of cotton.

Some notable mysteries were solved by Dr. Lacassagne, of the Lyons School of Medicine, who was one of the earliest to demonstrate the possibilities of medico-jurisprudence.

Sometime during the year 1885 an old man, Z——, was found dead in bed in circumstances that pointed strongly to suicide. This man had not been seen for some days, and his house was locked up. A son, Auguste Z——, accompanied by two others, climbed through a window to discover what was wrong. The old man was found lying in bed shot through the head.

There was no sign of any struggle, and the bed, apart from the bloodstains, was perfectly tidy. The bed-clothes were pulled close up to the chin, and clasped in the right hand of the dead man was a

revolver. It needed an effort to detach the weapon. Lying on top of the bed-clothes, on the left, was a crucifix.

Two doctors agreed that death had been instantaneous. The theory adopted was that the old man had sat up in bed to fire the fatal shot, and then fallen back dead.

For seven years the decision of suicide remained undisputed. Then for some reason or another suspicion was aroused against another son of the dead man, and the case was reopened. Dr. Lacassagne was invited to take up the inquiry.

Now up to that time it had been the view of medical experts that a weapon firmly held by a dead person was practically conclusive proof of suicide. A muscular spasm follows sudden death that causes a limb to remain as in the last moment of life. It was believed to be impossible to make a corpse hold an article with any degree of force.

Lacassagne made a number of experiments, and demonstrated that this theory was not entirely true. He found that a weapon in certain cases would be retained in the hand of a dead man.

It was still possible that old Z—— had committed suicide, but it was no longer a certainty. Lacassagne turned to other points. There had, it seems, been no scorching of the hair or blackening of the skin with grains of powder as might have been expected if the weapon had been fired at the distance of an inch or two. This was of great significance.

All those who had seen the body agreed that the arms had been stretched fully out by the sides. They

also agreed that the eyes were closed. Now in all cases of violent and sudden death the eyes remain open.

On these facts Lacassagne found it impossible to accept the view of suicide. He could not believe that Z—— had first shot himself—every doctor agreed that death had been quite instantaneous—and then pulled the bed-clothes up to his chin, thrust his hands, one still holding the pistol, at full length down beside him, placed a crucifix on the outside of the bed, and then closed his eyes.

The closed eyes alone made it certain that someone had been with Z—— after death. That murder had been committed was clear. A son of Z—— was accordingly put under arrest, and other circumstances made the case against him irresistible. He was convicted.

In every poison case the specialist must be called upon. Some very notable feats in toxicological analysis have been performed by Sir William Wilcox, the Consulting Medical Adviser to the Home Office. When Crippen murdered his wife with hyoscine, and buried her mutilated remains in a cellar, it was commonly accepted that hyoscine could not be found in a body after a few weeks. Crippen, however, had made the mistake of using quicklime in the attempt to get rid of traces of his crime.

“That,” said Sir William, “was just what the expert wanted, because quicklime is an antiseptic, and it helped to preserve the viscera, without which I doubt if the hyoscine would have been discovered. The viscera were submitted to very careful extrac-

tions. The work took no less than a month, and at last we succeeded in getting an alkaloidal poison which responded to all the tests for hyoscine. When it was put in a cat's eye, for instance, it produced paralysis. That cat was named 'Crippen' by my students, and it lived happily for many years afterwards."

Luck will sometimes aid where science is powerless. Sir Archibald Bodkin, the Director of Public Prosecutions, told this story at the Society of Arts a few years since. "It was a case of the forgery of a will purporting to have been made in the year 1542. Everybody knew it was a forgery, and the question was how to prove it to the satisfaction of a jury. It occurred to me at the time that the paper used in olden times was very different from modern paper. The paper on which the will was written was examined with the greatest possible care, and was found to be absolutely contemporaneous with the apparent date of the will. In that instance science certainly did not aid in the detection of crime, which was discovered by a purely accidental circumstance. A certain gentleman at that time used to spend his long vacations studying fifteenth and sixteenth century wills, and for some reason or other he had made lists of wills of the period of the particular forged will in question.

"He had observed that some of these wills were written upon paper that was folded double. He was induced to go to the particular part of the country in question, and go through the wills again in the individual diocesan registries. There he found a

genuine will filed which was on a single sheet of paper. On the forged will being sent to that diocesan registry, and compared with the single sheet, it was found that the irregular edges of the two fitted together. That showed how the sixteenth century paper had been obtained for the purpose of making the forged will."

The analyst can make many substances reveal a story. For instance, certain chemical changes take place in ink after a lapse of years, a fact which has been of value in many cases of forgery. Then there is sealing-wax. A man accused of raising a cheque from £10 to £10,000 claimed that it had been tampered with in the post. Analysis showed that the red wax with which the letter had been sealed corresponded exactly with wax found in possession of the prisoner, and was quite different from Post Office wax and other waxes bought haphazard. The prisoner was convicted.

CHAPTER V

FRANK FROEST SEES IT THROUGH

IN one sense, of course, all detectives must be men of the world. But there are degrees, limitations beyond which some do not care to step. Frank Froest was one of those rare exceptions who have a natural capacity for adapting himself to any circumstances and to any people. He was what the Americans call a "mixer." He had a faculty for making friends in all ranks of life, and though this habit served him in his profession, I do not think that it was cultivated. He was naturally genial and good-natured.

Blue of eye, light of step, of formidable strength—he could tear a pack of cards across with his hands—a whimsical raconteur, always dressed as scrupulously as the most fastidious man about town, he had most of the qualities of the perfect detective. He had resource, audacity, tenacity, a strength of purpose that carried him ruthlessly through obstacles if he could not go round them.

His courage was proverbial even among men to whom physical risks are a matter of course. One of the first incidents of his police service was the rescue of an Englishman involved in a brawl with an infuriated mob in the Italian quarter near Hatton Garden. Single-handed, Froest tackled the crowd, got his man into safety, and then collapsed in a dead faint. He had been stabbed in several places. It was

after his recovery that he joined the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard. He served for a while in Ireland, where at that time political outrages were being planned, came back at last to London, and, after a time, became one of the Scotland Yard emissaries in Paris. There he gained not only a very complete knowledge of the French language, but an acquaintance with French detective methods and Continental criminals that proved of lasting advantage to him.

When he was summoned home he was quickly recognized as a man who could go anywhere and do anything. Twice he was "borrowed" by the United States for difficult and delicate work. It was Froest who was responsible for running to earth Winford Moore, a "next-of-kin" swindler of large ideas who numbered his victims in every State in the Union. These people parted with a very large sum in the aggregate in the the belief that Moore would be able to establish their right to millions of unclaimed money lying in the Bank of England. So cunning was Moore that even after he had been caught it took three juries to convict him.

After this, Froest hung on to the trail of a train robber, followed him across America, and undaunted by the threat that came to him that his quarry carried a revolver and had threatened to "croak him" on sight, finally came up with him at Gatti's Restaurant in the Strand, and arrested him at a dinner-table. The revolver hung over Froest's mantelpiece at Scotland Yard for years.

In another case, Froest was responsible for putting a period to the exploits of a maniac cowboy murderer



SUPERINTENDENT FRANK FROEST

named Kuhne, who had shot and mutilated half a dozen men before he was arrested. Each crime was recorded by a notch on the butt of a revolver. Kuhne's pet eccentricity was always to dress himself up in his "murder suit" whenever he set out on his grim business. In these clothes, and these clothes alone, would he kill. Thus was he dressed when Froest at last found him. The detective grappled his man before he could draw, and there was an epic fight. But for his great strength and throttling grip Froest would undoubtedly have had as his epitaph a seventh notch on the butt of the revolver.

His subtlety as well as his resolution were demonstrated when he plucked Jabez Balfour, who had been guilty of one of the most colossal financial frauds of modern times from the wilds of the Argentine, when every diplomatic resource to secure his surrender had been exhausted. That story I have already told.* He brought back Dr. Jameson from South Africa to take his trial for high treason, and eventually became the executive chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, where his organizing ability and diplomatic skill were given an adequate sphere of operations.

All the events I have now to recite happened in the days when Froest was developing into a man marked for rapid promotion. It was something in the 'nineties.

The Bankers' Association was worried. Several neat little coups had been pulled off, and something had to be done about it. The final straw had been a

* See "Scotland Yard: Its History and Associations" (Geoffrey Bles, 1926).

cheque for five thousand pounds presented at the Bloomsbury branch of the Westminster Bank, apparently signed by a great firm of printers. Every Friday a similar cheque was cashed to meet wages and other weekly expenses, and there was nothing about this particular one to arouse suspicion. The messenger—seemingly a clerk—had handed in with the cheque the usual form which indicated how the money was to be split up. No question was raised, and the man departed with the money.

A quarter of an hour later the cashier was shocked by the arrival of another man with a similar cheque. The bearer was detained and the police were sent for. Then it was found that the second cheque was genuine—it was the first that had been forged.

It was a clean-cut piece of work, clearly carried out by a master. The bank detectives became busy, but after weeks of effort it was obvious that they were getting nowhere. Scotland Yard was called in, and Frank Froest, then a detective-inspector, was detailed to take up the case.

The aid that could be given him was scanty. The bogus cheque itself told nothing but that the forger was an accomplished leader in his profession. There was a description of the clerk who had carried away the money. By good fortune the cashier remembered his appearance.

Froest returned to Scotland Yard and meditated for a while. Of one thing he was confident. No professional forger would have taken the risk of presenting the cheque in person. It was more than probable that the clerk had been a dupe. With this possibility,

the detective commenced a stupendous labour that only his faith could justify. He gathered together the daily newspapers for a month before the date on which the cheque was cashed, and devoted close attention to their advertisement columns. Some men might have been daunted by the seeming impossibility of tracing out an unknown individual by the study of thousands of announcements of clerical vacancies. Not so Froest. He plodded tenaciously on with his self-imposed task. When he concluded, he had cut out hundreds of advertisements, any one of which might be that he sought.

Then began another phase of monotonous and discouraging inquiry lasting for many weeks. Each of those selected advertisements had to be traced to its source. A genial, unruffled, blue-eyed man tramped here and there about the business quarters of London with dogged resolution in his mind.

So, at long last, he came to a block of offices in the West Central district where an elderly housekeeper remembered a tenant who had occupied a room for a few weeks before the forgery. The name under which he masqueraded did not matter. It was obviously false. "He's gone, you say?" remarked the detective, casually.

"Yes. I have no complaint against him," said the housekeeper. "He was a quiet, nice-spoken sort of gentleman, and very generous."

"Ah." Froest jingled some coins in his trousers pocket. "Did he happen to have any clerks?"

The housekeeper rubbed her hands on her apron. "Only one. A nice young fellow he was, too. It was

a pity that the gentleman could not keep him on. I was sorry about that."

No sign of the interest he felt appeared in Froest's face. But he drove the conversation till he was sure of one thing. This woman's description of the clerk corresponded with that of the man who had cashed the cheque. "Where is this young man now?" he asked.

"I don't know. I think he got a job in Chancery Lane. I couldn't say for certain. All I know is that he spends a lot of his spare time playing billiards, and you might possibly run across him in one of the saloons about the Strand."

With this Froest had to be content. The chase had taken a new tangent. He spent a fortnight watching billiards in various likely haunts. There came a day when he found the man for whom he was seeking, and drew him quietly aside. The young man was quite ready to admit his identity and to tell what he knew. It was much what Froest had expected. The other had been out of work, and had answered the advertisement for a clerk, being, as he considered at the time, lucky to get the berth at thirty shillings a week. His duties were light, and he was at the office daily from ten till four. There was a certain amount of correspondence with the Continent ("a blind," reflected the detective), and occasionally cheques would arrive with which he was sent to the bank. So satisfied was his employer with the new clerk that the wages were increased to two pounds. At the same time, the employer observed that the job would shortly have to come to an end, as he expected to have to go to

Berlin for six months. The young man swallowed all this without suspicion.

Froest listened to a familiar story with immobile face. He could almost have recited the rest. "One Friday afternoon," said the clerk, "he gave me a cheque and told me to go to the Westminster Bank and get it cashed. I was to get so much in notes, so much in gold, and the rest in silver. He was in a hurry, and told me to take a cab and get back as soon as possible. I went to the bank, gave in the cheque and the note, and after I received the money I got into the cab to return, but my governor met me on the way and took the money from me, saying he had to go into the City. I went to the office on Saturday morning, and I found a letter from the governor enclosing ten pounds and directing me to go for a month's holiday and wire him where I was. When I came back from my holiday I found another letter telling me he would not require my services any longer, and enclosing a five pound note."

Froest nodded with grim satisfaction at this verification of his theory of the crime, and took his new acquaintance with him to Scotland Yard. There, one after another, the clerk was shown all the portraits of expert forgers stored in the Rogues' Gallery. Over each and every one he shook his head. He could not recognize his erstwhile employer. It is not always so simple as people imagine to make an identification from a photograph. Froest was disappointed. All his ingenuity and hard labour seemed to have culminated in a cul-de-sac.

True, cunning and adroit questioning did elicit from

the clerk a fairly accurate description of the forger. He had been particularly impressed by the dark restless eyes of the wanted man. Froest wrote down the description, and it went into the archives of the Yard after a period of fruitless work. The detective-inspector was assigned to other matters.

The element of chance is one that no experienced detective will deny. It was chance that took Froest to Paris some six months later. There was some formality in connection with an extradition case which he had to attend. This, however, became delayed over the weekend, and so the detective had the luxury of a Sunday to himself. A lovely spring day tempted him to an excursion to the forest of Fontainebleau. There, after an hour or so, he lost his bearings, and cast about for some person of whom he might inquire the way to the nearest railway station.

A man and a girl on horseback drew near, and raising his hat the detective approached them. The man met his inquiries civilly and gave the required direction. Froest thanked him and withdrew. The pair cantered on.

An active man with an idle spell will sometimes find his mind queerly alert. The girl, a piquant, golden-haired beauty with laughing eyes, had received scarcely more than a passing glance from the detective. It was the man who intrigued him. Froest was something of a linguist himself. The horseman had spoken in good French but there was just a touch—the pronunciation of the word “Bois,” for instance—which convinced Froest that the other was either English or American. Another odd impression was

made by certain little mannerisms in the man's demeanour and appearance — particularly his restless dark eyes. Froest had an uneasy feeling that somewhere, somehow, this man's tricks of manner had been described to him.

The stranger of Fontainebleau had not the least superficial resemblance to the forger and, for the while, Froest did not link them together. Nevertheless, so strong was the impression on his mind that, from the shelter of a group of trees on a piece of rising ground, he watched the riders till they dismounted at a small hotel on the verge of the forest. He saw enough of their reception to satisfy him that they were habitués of the place, and thoughtfully resumed his journey back to Paris.

Night brought no resolve to his cogitations. He was sure that he ought to know the stranger, but he could put no finger upon him. So restless was he on the point that after he had concluded the formalities of the extradition case, the following day he decided to go back to Fontainebleau to settle the matter in his own mind. Just for once a Scotland Yard man behaved like a free-lance detective of fiction.

It was lunchtime when he arrived at the little hotel. The detective did not scruple to order an excellent meal and to pass not unmerited encomiums on the excellence of the cuisine. He solicited the opinion of monsieur, his host, on the important question of wine after the repast, and naturally could do no less than invite monsieur to aid in its disposal.

Talk drifted, as might have been expected, on to the affairs of the hotel. Monsieur was eloquent in

praise of two of his present guests—a Count Lewis and his young bride, the Countess Theresa Lewis. The Count, it appeared, was of Russian extraction, widely travelled, of immense wealth, and with great estates in America. They were a delightful couple, so pleasant, so charming, of such a discernment.

The wine finished, Froest loitered to exchange a few words with Madame, the hotel-keeper's plump little gossip of a wife. She was no more averse from conversation than her husband. She sang the praises of her titled guests volubly. They, she said, had gone for a day's shooting in the forest. They were a handsome, an interesting couple. And, oh, *m'sieu'*, what a romance! There would be a gap when they went away.

"So they intend to leave shortly?" inquired Froest politely.

"Indeed, no, *m'sieu'*. But the Count is a man of great affairs. He is negotiating the sale of a tract of land to a railway company in the United States and he may have to leave suddenly."

"They have only lately married?"

"Just a month or so. Quite a romance that. They first met while she was visiting the Salon in Paris. She tripped on a staircase, and might have injured herself but that the Count caught her in his arms. Strangely enough they were brought together again in somewhat similar circumstances in Monte Carlo. A careless smoker dropped a match which set alight the flimsy dress she was wearing. The Count, who happened to be passing, flung his coat round her, and so saved her from being burnt alive. Can you be surprised that they fell in love? It is inexplicable, *m'sieu'*,

but her parents disapproved of the match. Nevertheless they married. There never was a more perfect love match. He is a devoted husband." She halted suddenly. "There, I have let my tongue run away with me. The Count—it is a little foible of his—desires to be thought a Frenchman. You will not betray my confidence?"

Froest's lips parted in a disarming smile. "I quite understand, madame. I am all discretion. But I interrupt you."

"I am busy," she confessed. "There is a special little dinner for the Count and Countess this evening. He made out the menu himself."

"May I see?" Without waiting for her consent he reached out and took the card from her hand. One glance cleared his mind of all perplexity. He remembered now how he had come to hear of those restless, dark eyes. The handwriting was the same as that of the letter which had been sent dismissing the clerk who had cashed the cheque. With a smile and a bow the detective returned the menu.

"Admirable! perfect!" he cried. "It is a dinner such as one dreams of. Would you put yourself to the infinite trouble of making a copy for me? I should like to bring a party of friends down to repeat it."

Madame was delighted. It was only when the affable stranger had gone that she realized he had inadvertently taken the menu in the Count's writing and left her the copy. Well, it was of small moment.

This was before the days of fingerprints, otherwise Froest might have adopted other methods. He considered his course as he made his way back to Paris.

He was reasonably sure that he had located the forger, but any hasty action might have serious consequences. Before an arrest could be made there would have to be something more certain than his mere recollection of handwriting. He evolved an ingenious plan.

He went to a photographer. With an air of blunt candour he explained that he was an Englishman with a peculiar request to make. That day, to his astonishment, he had seen at an hotel in the Forest of Fontainebleau a girl whom he recognized as the runaway wife of a friend of his. He told a long and circumstantial story of a love tragedy, to which the photographer listened with sympathetic interest. Now the friend was seeking a divorce. It would complete the evidence if a photograph could be taken of the wife with Count Lewis. The thing would have to be done circumspectly, however. Would it be possible, under pretence of taking some views of the forest, to get a photograph of the lady and Count Lewis together? Handsome payment would be made.

The photographer declared that in a work where so much discretion was required he would act himself. Within twenty-four hours the picture would be ready.

He kept his word. Froest sent a wire to Scotland Yard, and with the portrait and the menu made a dash for London, but before he did so he gave a hint to the French police to keep an eye on the Count.

They had the clerk waiting at Scotland Yard when Froest reached home. In silence the detective-inspector handed him the purloined menu. "Where did you get this? This is my guv'nor's writing," declared the startled young man.

"Do you recognize that?" demanded Froest, thrusting before his eyes an excellent photograph of Count Lewis and his wife mounted and equipped for a country excursion. The other's eyes grew wider. "Why, yes. That's the guv'nor. He's got a beard in the picture but I know him. There's no doubt about it. I've never seen the lady, though."

The lady was of little importance from Froest's point of view. It was enough that he now had definite evidence of the identity of Count Lewis with the forger. There were still those antiquated red-tape formalities to go through between the Foreign Offices of the two countries, and while waiting for the wheels to move Froest spent some time in tracing out the antecedents of "Count Lewis"—not so difficult a matter now that he had a portrait of the man.

His name was soon disclosed as Ralph Sloane, *alias* Cooper, for, after all, he was in the records of the Yard. There was an outline of his career, which was amplified with the help of various American detective organizations. Sloane had been a United States naval officer, employed in the Navy Department at Washington. As a young man his tastes outran his means, and he turned to a natural talent for forgery to gratify them. By bogus orders on the Paymaster-General he possessed himself of £40,000, on the strength of which he married. Before his honeymoon was concluded his fraud was discovered. He was arrested and sent to prison for five years. Incidentally, there had been an episode with another lady, and on this ground his wife divorced him.

Released from gaol, Sloane, on promises of reform,

was found a job in an insurance office at Columbus, Ohio. There he developed a taste for religion, which was explained when he married a wealthy widow who was a strong church supporter. Her fortune was soon dissipated. Utterly reckless now, he planned an ingenious post office robbery, by which he possessed himself temporarily of a package of drafts on the Bank of Mobile worth £4,500. These he contrived to alter in his favour—using a fictitious name—and return to the mail for delivery. He was, however, a little less wary than he afterwards became, and suspicion pointing to him he was placed under arrest. Released on bail he absconded to San Francisco where, by means of forged testimonials, he became the confidential secretary of a wealthy man named Treadwell. Fortune played into his hands, for, after a while, Treadwell fell ill, and his affairs were largely left to his secretary. Sloane made good use of his time, and before the crash he had defrauded his employer of £82,800. He got safely away to England, and for some years lived royally. Time came, however, when his fortune gave out. He commenced a campaign against the London banks, and succeeded in getting £4,000 from Glyn Mills and Co. Then he made one of those silly trivial mistakes to which even the most subtle rogues are liable—he tried to cash a small cheque in person while wearing an obvious false beard. That cost him five years' penal servitude, from which he had been released a year or so before this story commences.

The French police took no chances when the request for arrest did at length reach them. A couple of detectives with half a dozen gendarmes were sent to

apprehend the "Count." Sloane appreciated the futility of resistance and quietly surrendered. Here the "Countess" Theresa drops out of the story amid a flood of tears. She, poor girl, like others had been the dupe of Sloane. She went back to her parents.

An odd touch of flaming melodrama marked the departure of the forger from French shores. Froest had built against him a case too plain for the extradition proceedings to be unduly prolonged. An order was made that he should be handed over to the British authorities, and Froest was sent to Havre to receive him.

It was nine o'clock at night when a singular procession reached the harbour and boarded the vessel on which the lone British detective was waiting. There was a squad of soldiers, a dozen armed gendarmes, and four plain-clothes men carrying revolvers. In their midst was Sloane, handcuffed, and no doubt mightily amused and flattered at the fuss. A sub-prefect presented the prisoner to Froest with a request for a formal receipt, and meantime another French officer proceeded to unlock the handcuffs.

"One moment," protested Froest. "Before you release this man I should like to search him."

It is possible that the Frenchmen saw in this reasonable request a veiled reflection on their vigilance and capacity. It is possible that the sub-prefect was simply a wooden-headed stickler for forms. His instructions were to hand over the man. What Froest did with him after the formal receipt was signed was the Scotland Yard man's own affair. But no search should be made till the receipt was signed ; after it was

signed the irons would be removed. Sloane also protested at the indignity, and this in itself was enough to make Froest inflexible.

He brushed the sub-prefect impatiently aside and took a step forward. At that moment the handcuffs were removed. Sloane made but a feeble fight of it for he was matched against a man whose physical strength was proverbial. An excited gendarme sprang forward with drawn sword. Froest flung his man behind him, and the gendarme looked down the steady barrel of a revolver.

"This is illegal," interposed the sub-prefect. "This man is still under the protection of the French flag."

"Tell that gendarme to put back his sword," ordered Froest.

International complications were imminent, for Froest was determined not to give way. The burly master of the ship elbowed his way to the front. "This is a British ship," he pointed out. "If this officer requires assistance I shall see that he gets it."

At this the French officers capitulated. They probably realized by now that they were being led into deep waters. Froest searched his man without further molestation, and with a shrug of the shoulders produced a knife which had been concealed in a secret pocket. The scene ended in apologies, and Sloane, a pair of British handcuffs on his wrists, was led below.

Nothing of all this was revealed at the trial at the Old Bailey. Sloane was defended by the late Sir Forrest Fulton, but the efforts of that able counsel

did not avail him. He was sent to fifteen years' penal servitude.

Sloane was the centre of still another dramatic incident ere the prison gates closed behind him. The trial had finished late at night and he was sent to Pentonville in a cab, handcuffed, and accompanied by two warders. At the gates of the prison one of the warders stepped out. Sloane immediately brought his ironed wrists down with savage force on the head of the man remaining in the cab and took to flight. He had gained on the pursuit that was immediately organized when he ran into the arms of a young plain-clothes constable, who terminated a brief struggle by a well-timed blow to the point of the jaw.

They carried him back to prison. The career of Ralph Sloane was over.

CHAPTER VI

“ IF——”

THE most significant word in the language is “if.”

There are men and women who have died because of an “if,” and this is the story of one of them. If Emile Gourbin had thought of visiting a manicurist—if he had been a better actor. . . . Search, if you like, the archives of the principal detective bureaux in the world—in London, Paris, New York, Berlin, Vienna—and you will understand how frequently fate plays a grim game with an “if.”

The fact of the matter is that, nowadays, the lady or gentleman who takes a step outside the criminal code often does not get a sporting chance. The law has no scruples in potting its game sitting. It has made a profound study of “ifs.” It is rarely possible for any human being, however farseeing, to dodge them all. The detective has called to his service so many allies in the realms of science that “ifs” are multiplied beyond the conception of most criminals.

There was a time when the law-breaker knew to some extent the type of detective against whom he would be pitted, the methods that would be adopted in the hue and cry. Now he cannot be sure. He may have his guilt made manifest by some man he never sees. Some enthusiastic specialist working in a laboratory, not necessarily with test tubes, but even with so prosaic an instrument as a vacuum cleaner,



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may glean a story which nothing can controvert. The microscopist, the bacteriologist, the analyst, the photographer, and a score of other experts in the domain of science are mobilized in that search for “if.” It will be found—almost to a certainty they will find it.

All this is preliminary to the case of Emile Gourbin. Now, Emile Gourbin was a clerk with a post at a bank in Lyons. It has been the fashion since the days of Lombroso to dwell on the abnormality of murderers—observe that I make no secret of the fact that Gourbin was a murderer. As a fact, murderers are much like other people. You and I, gentle reader, are quite capable in certain circumstances of killing someone. That is one of the difficulties of investigating cases of homicide.

Therefore, I regret that I cannot paint Gourbin as otherwise than a very ordinary young man to all external appearances. He was of a type familiar everywhere in the world—an amiable fellow of convivial disposition, perhaps a trifle neurotic, with plenty of friends, and ambitious of ultimate promotion in the bank.

There was, of course, the girl. Marie Latelle was as fragrant and piquant a piece of femininity as ever caused a bank clerk’s heart to miss a beat. It is not to be supposed that this gay and debonair young lady was without her string of admirers. For besides her personal attractions was a “dot,” which would serve to solve many of the difficulties of starting housekeeping for one with the modest emoluments of a bank clerk. Her family if not wealthy was at least well-to-do, and

they had a neat little villa on the outskirts of Lyons. Yet I would not do Gourbin an injustice. He was very much in love, and if Marie Latelle had been without a sou it would possibly have made little difference.

Here it will be noticed that I break all the rules of the detective story-writer. I have given away my murderer instead of reserving him for the last paragraph, and the astute reader will already have gleaned some conception of motives. Things, outside fiction, do not happen that way, and I am bound to my facts. Young Gourbin and Marie fell in love. There came a day when they were betrothed. Then it was that Gourbin touched the limits of ecstasy. He swam in dizzy heights, no longer a bank clerk but a silken prince of romance, the affianced of a princess of dreams.

Thus the days passed. Gourbin was an assiduous lover—too assiduous it might have been for the little lady, who had hitherto thrown her kerchief to any gallant as her butterfly whim dictated. I would not be misunderstood. There was no harm in Marie. She was young and volatile. Her dainty feet scarce touched the ground. The inhibitions of her lover were a matter of jest—but more than once of tears and passionate defiance.

The psychology of a man fiercely in love baffled even Solomon. Why, therefore, should I attempt to define it? There were morose brooding fits of sulky jealousy—futile outbursts of anger. He was suspicious and contrite by turns, but always at the back of his mind was the morbid fear that she was playing with him. Such a frame of mind reacting on a temperament such as Gourbin's might have been the subject

of either comedy or tragedy. Destiny decided that it should be tragedy.

The days grew into months. And one morning it befell that they found little Marie dead in the parlour of her parents' home. There were the marks of a man's fingers about her throat, but beyond that there was no clue by which the crime might be brought home to the assassin. The doctors said that she must have been killed shortly before midnight. So far as any of the family knew she had had no visitors that evening.

The house lay just outside the boundaries of the Lyons police district, but the local gendarmes felt that they were confronted with a mystery that was beyond their powers. They, therefore, turned the case over to the city authorities, and the complicated but highly efficient French system of criminal investigation began at once to work.

Unlike British procedure, a magistrate invariably takes a prominent part in the investigation of a crime in France. The detectives, the *police judiciaire*, are apart from the police proper, are especially recruited, and have never worn a police uniform.

These, then, were the skilled and experienced officials who began to probe the mystery. The usual formulæ were sedulously observed. Nothing that might be of moment in their search was overlooked. They probed relentlessly in every direction. Beyond the marks on the white neck of the girl, which on a superficial examination they took to be fingerprints too blurred to be of use, there was no tangible thing on which they could fasten. There was not a shadow or a shred of

proof which might open some avenue of inquiry. They were baffled, against a blank wall.

That terrible snowball, the *procès-verbal*, which is unknown to British jurisprudence, but which is so formidable a weapon in the hands of Continental police, was commenced. Anyone and everyone who might have had any connection with the crime, or who conceivably might throw light upon it, was subjected to interrogation. All the tittle-tattle and gossip of fifty tongues was reduced to writing to be used—when there should be someone to use it against.

Even here there was nothing solid against which the detectives could lean. Suspicion there was, but an utterly unsubstantiated and flimsy suspicion.

In the wide cast that was taken, it was, of course, inevitable that Emile Gourbin should be sought. Among the whispers that had been caught by the detectives was word of his jealousy. That might mean anything or nothing; but he, at least, had a possible motive. So they talked with him. They plied him with subtle questions. He was badgered and brow-beaten and coaxed. They were seeking for an "if"—a little "if"—but the examining magistrate and his confrères were ready to snatch at the most tenuous trifle. In the beginning it had nothing to do with manicuring. Their methods were as old as crime itself. Gourbin was cunningly cross-examined; but he had expected that.

The young man was utterly grief-stricken, garrulously desolate. He was very ready to tell them anything he knew, anything that might aid them. Alas, it was very little. Through his streaming tears he

answered brokenly. Yes, he had been foolishly, insanely in love with his beautiful Marie. There was now nothing in the world for him to look forward to but death. Ere that came, no doubt, messieurs would have found the dastard who had done this thing. With vengeance inflicted on the murderer of his heart's life he would die happy. Yes, it was true that he had been a little—the *Bon Dieu* forgive him—a little jealous. He had even—yes, messieurs—reproved his rosebud for little freedoms with other men. She was young. She did not understand that it was a censorious world. Messieurs would pardon his uncontrollable emotion. She was gone, the incomparable. . . .

A wise man, it was once laid down by an eminent Persian philosopher, sometimes does not know when to begin ; a fool never knows when to stop. So it was with Emile Gourbin. His grief was just a little too grievous ; he was a shade too insistent on his emotions.

“ That man,” whispered one veteran police official to another, “ is the murderer of Marie Latelle.”

“ True, friend,” agreed his colleagues. “ But how are we going to prove it ? ”

This may be an age of detective science, but science is not always necessary in certain aspects of human nature. These men knew a liar when they met one. But it is very difficult, even in France, to substantiate a charge of murder against a man because he has paraded a grief he has not felt.

Nothing that the young bank clerk had said in his examination was accepted. Every point was probed and tested. Again the officers ran against a blank wall. There is nothing more exasperating for a police officer

than to feel a moral certainty of the guilt of a person, and yet to find that every fact he unearths bears apparent testimony to that person's innocence.

In practically every particular the story told by Gourbin was borne out. He had given what appeared to be an unassailable alibi. On the evening of the murder he had been entertained by friends at a house some miles away from that in which Marie Latelle had been found dead. These friends had been sought out. Not only did they assert that Gourbin had dined with them, but he had remained playing cards until about one o'clock in the morning, and then gone to his room.

Now if that was true, and the conclusion of the doctors that the girl had been killed before midnight was also true, the young bank clerk could not have been the assassin. It seemed pure madness to put Gourbin under arrest. That, however, was just what the police did. They were convinced that there was a nigger in the fence somewhere. There was nothing to go upon but an impression, and that impression had been utterly shattered by the alibi. British police officers would certainly and properly have hesitated at such a drastic step. It looked like courting trouble.

But the Lyons men played their hunch and took a chance. If the prisoner was innocent—why, so much the better for him. If he was guilty—well, certain of them held their own views. It could do no harm to put him under lock and key till they had decided the next step.

Gourbin, also, was no doubt quite content. They were fools, these detectives, if they thought to match their wits against his. And it was perfectly true that

they were in a quandary. Any legal tribunal in the world would have laughed them out of court had they dared to take their case for trial.

We have now reached a point at which the story of Emile Gourbin becomes different from that of other murderers. Things had gone in some degree as he had expected. He had reckoned that his alibi was airtight—that it would place the police in just such a cul-de-sac as they had in fact reached. He had not thought of Dr. Edmond Locard ; it is doubtful if he even knew of his existence. What interest has the ordinary, obscure bank clerk in scientific matters ?

Yet, all the same, Dr. Locard was quite a well-known person in circles of the world alien to those in which Gourbin moved, though perhaps not as well known as he has since become. His reputation as a criminological scientist was worldwide. He was, and is, among that select few which includes people like Hans Gross in Prague, Sir Bernard Spilsbury in London, and Dr. René Faraliqu in Paris. By a chance unfortunate for Gourbin, his efficiently equipped police laboratory was situated in Lyons itself.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that in their dilemma the Lyons officials should turn to this calm student, who, with his strong face, thick black hair, and dark moustache with a slightly aggressive little tilt at each corner, looked quite unlike a student or a professor, and least of all like Sherlock Holmes.

He listened thoughtfully to the story that was told to him. Quite frankly the police assured him that, unless he could find some way out, the man who

they were convinced was a brutal murderer would have to go free. He was their last hope.

"I had better look at this girl," he said.

So he was taken in a motor-car to where the still body of Marie Latelle lay. He studied it with close attention, and then proceeded to adjust a singular photographic microscope of his own invention.

This instrument, eight feet long, is capable of magnifying objects up to fifty thousand times their natural size. It was rather a pet of Locard's, for it had more than once been of service in simplifying many extraordinary cases when other methods had failed.

I step aside for the moment from the episode of Gourbin to recount that of Josef Holle, who the police of Paris had good reason to suppose was doing a flourishing coining business by using nickel and an alloy to manufacture bogus franc pieces. Against him, however, they could get no positive evidence. They referred the matter to Locard, and on his advice Holle was arrested on a trumped up charge, which had nothing to do with coining. He was provided with a new suit of clothes and his own were taken away from him and sent to Locard, who had them beaten in a dust-proof bag—a vacuum cleaner is now used in similar cases—and then photographed the dust through his microscope. When the negatives were developed a large proportion of nickel and alloy particles were disclosed. The scientist followed this up with a chemical analysis. Those bits of metal were exactly similar to those which had been used in the false coins. That finished Holle.

Then there was the murder case which resulted from the quarrel of two men employed in a timber yard. One of them had been killed in a desperate struggle to and fro over the ground. There were no eyewitnesses, and the suspected man declared that he had not either quarrelled or fought. From his clothes, however, Locard extracted dust, among which, as well as sawdust and wood fibre, were infinitesimal fragments of soil which showed that he had at least been in contact with the soil of the timber yard. The dead man's clothes showed an exactly similar result. This evidence provided the missing link and convicted the prisoner.

As I have said, it was with this appliance that Dr. Locard examined the body of Marie Latelle. He almost at once established beyond cavil or doubt that the marks on the neck were not blurred fingerprints, but superficial scratches that must have been inflicted by her assailant during the death struggle. The skin of the throat had in places been slightly scraped away.

The police glumly accepted his conclusion. Here, it seemed, was the last chance of a clue washed out. If the great criminologist, with his wealth of knowledge and resource, could not help them, where were they to turn? The case was at an end. Gourbin had beaten them after all.

Something of their feelings they conveyed to the black-haired scientist, who shrugged his shoulders and shook his head with a whimsical smile.

“ Oh no,” was the effect of his reply. “ Give me an hour or two. Meanwhile I would like to see this young man.”

They brought the prisoner to him. Gourbin was a little confused, a little doubtful of what it all meant. But he met the swift, first scrutiny of the scientist with confident self-possession. What harm could this keen-eyed, stern-faced man do to him? Had he not established an impregnable alibi?

"So you are Gourbin," said the scientist quietly. "Sit down, I want to see your hands."

The bank clerk silently obeyed. Locard drew his chair nearer to that of the prisoner and studied the hand that the other had thrust forward. Those who were present in the room beheld the strange sight of a great scientist acting with infinite care as manicurist to the nails of a suspected murderer.

"What are you doing?" demanded the mystified Gourbin.

"You will know in time," answered the absorbed scientist. "Keep your hand still."

Gourbin was not the only person who was mystified by the action of the scientist. The police officials themselves were puzzled to some extent. But they had enough confidence in Locard to be sure that there was profound significance in any action he took, however fantastic it might seem. He had some practical end in view, and it boded no good to the murderer of Marie Latelle.

"That will do," announced Locard. "I must get back to the laboratory. In a few hours I may be able to tell you something."

Back in the laboratory the scientist and his assistants set to work with businesslike zeal—for even a wizard of crime investigation has to be businesslike

if he is to succeed. Also in matters of this kind speed is frequently of importance. Locard knew that he had obtained the clue which had hitherto been overlooked. A very short while would either demonstrate the guilt of Gourbin or his innocence.

There are many great scientists in the world; there are many great police detectives. In this case Locard displayed some of the qualities of both. Science had provided the instrument, but shrewd reasoning from effect to cause had really given the clue. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred had they made the discovery that the marks on the throat of the victim were scratches and not fingerprints would have left it at that. Not so Locard. He recognized that the scratches might be almost as infallible as fingerprints in bringing home the crime.

It is not fair to hold the reader longer in suspense. Locard had reasoned that the person who was responsible for the crime had carried away *beneath his finger nails* the chief evidence that was needed in the case. With that point fixed on his mind, he had seen his course clear. He had acted as a manicurist, and it was on the material he had found beneath Gourbin's nails that he set to work.

The first fact that the microscopic photographs revealed was that in the dirt taken from the nails there were unmistakable blood corpuscles. That, by itself, was enormously significant, but by no means conclusive. It was quite possible for an innocent man to have had his hands in contact with blood. A second discovery carried the case a step farther. Some very tiny fragments of flesh were found—just such frag-

ments as the murderer must have carried away. Again there was the remote possibility of coincidence. These two things combined were of enormous value, and a strong case against Gourbin might have been built on them, notwithstanding the alibi to which he so resolutely held. All the same, there was not that precision of proof which Locard wanted. It was circumstantial evidence without absolute certainty. A jury might have preferred to believe the alibi of the accused man.

Once Locard had found the tiny pores of a murderer's hands clogged with blood, which he believed that he had washed away. With a remembrance of this case before him, he scanned the photographs again and again, seeking for he scarcely knew what. He asked the police to examine the personal belongings of the dead girl, and at long last he was able to put his finger on the point that was to send Gourbin to the guillotine.

The photographs disclosed traces of something that, on experiment, proved to be nothing else than the face powder which Marie Latelle had been in the habit of using. Coincidence could not stretch so far as that. The blood corpuscles, the fragments of flesh, and the face powder could not be explained away.

These facts were placed in the hands of the examining magistrate, and the confident Gourbin brought once more before him. Then one by one the proofs were stressed to him. For a time he held out, but when the damning fact of the face powder was made clear to him, in the dramatic style affected in French criminal procedure, he broke down and confessed.

It was all very simple. Those people who had substantiated the alibi had been perfectly sincere. Time flies fast during a convivial evening, and who would suspect a guest of altering a clock? Thus Gourbin had gone to his room much earlier than was supposed. He had slipped out while his companions imagined that he was in bed, had that fatal interview with Marie, returned, and put the clock right without rousing any suspicion.

He had luck—to a point. If he had thought of those finger-nails the mystery of Marie Latelle would have remained a mystery and the guillotine would have been cheated after all. “ If——.”

CHAPTER VII

ARTHUR NEIL'S BIGGEST CASE

IT must be something more than twenty years since I first knew Arthur Neil. He was then Divisional-Detective-Inspector of the Y Division, with his headquarters at Kentish Town; a tall, lean man, tireless physically and mentally. We were thrown together on a murder case in which I was interested, and the then head of the Criminal Investigation Department told me: "Neil will not rest till he has got his teeth into a case and shaken it to bits."

That judgment stands to-day. When the detective system of Scotland Yard was rearranged, Neil was an inevitable choice as one of the four supreme detectives of London. He has sacrificed his moustache, he has become a man of weight and substance, and he looks very much more like a prosperous farmer than the subtle detective that he is. But although he is more burly than of old—which he attributes to having to use a car nowadays instead of walking—he still has that old bull-dog tenacity of purpose, that fierce energy and natural shrewdness which have brought him his reputation.

The other day I came across a paragraph in a book by Arthur Train in which he sketches the attributes real and imaginary of the American detective. "Incidentally," he says, "they, one and all, take

off their hats to Scotland Yard. They will tell you that the Englishman may be slow (fancy an American inspector of police wearing grey suede gloves and brewing himself a dish of tea in his office at four o'clock !), but that once he goes after a crook he is bound to get him—it is merely a question of time."

That parenthesis tickled me. I thought of Neil and many of his colleagues. Somehow grey suede gloves and the brewing of tea are things with which I never associated them. There are no doubt men at Scotland Yard, as at Mulberry Street, who do wear grey suede gloves. I have known Neil wear them on occasion, and look as if he was used to them—which he really isn't. But I do doubt if there is any exceptional craving for tea at Scotland Yard.

Many famous crimes have been investigated by Neil. His methods have not always been those of the approved detective of fiction, but his successes have been many—more even than the public realize. For he not only gets his man, but he gets the evidence, which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is a much more difficult matter.

In the annals of criminal investigation the tracking of George Joseph Smith, of the "Brides-in-the-Bath" infamy is likely to become a classic. For in that case perhaps the most cunning murderer of this generation was run to earth from the slender clue of a newspaper cutting. He had taken the most infinite precautions to avoid all chance of betrayal, but his real error was when he chose to operate in the police division for which Neil was responsible. Of course, he

probably did not know that there existed such a person as Detective-Inspector Arthur Neil. Murder was with him a trade from which he felt that he had eliminated all the risks.

Just before Christmas in 1914 a Mr. John Lloyd arrived in Highgate with his bride. They went to a house in Orchard Road, where they had engaged lodgings a week beforehand, but the landlady, with a prevision that later events justified, decided that she did not like the look of Lloyd, and refused to take them in. There was a scene, which culminated, curiously enough, in a detective-sergeant, who was a friend of the landlady's, being called upon to order the couple away.

So Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd sought other apartments. They found them in Bismarck Road in the neighbourhood. But before accepting the rooms Mr. Lloyd was very precise in his inquiries about the bathroom facilities. No very great attention was paid to this point at the time. The following morning Mrs. Lloyd was found lying dead in the bath. An inquest was held, and it was decided that death was accidental.

On the face of it all, this had nothing to do with the Criminal Investigation Department. There was a plausible and natural explanation and very little to arouse suspicion. But a cutting reached Detective-Inspector Neil, which reported a very similar case of a woman being drowned in a bath at Blackpool the previous year. There a coroner's jury had found that "the deceased suffered from heart disease, and was found drowned in a hot bath, probably being seized with a fit or faint. The cause of death was



[Topical Press,

WEDDING GROUP WHICH INCLUDES THREE OF THE "BIG FIVE" AT SCOTLAND YARD.

Left to right : Supt. Brown, Chief Const. Wensley, Supt. Hawkins, Supt. Neil.

accidental." This cutting very much aroused the interest of Neil. In an American trial counsel, in the course of a speech, remarked : " It has been said that if a person meets in a waste place three trees growing in a row, he thinks they were so planted by man ; should he find the distances equal, he is convinced." Neil took steps to look up Mr. Lloyd with promptitude. It might be nothing but a coincidence ; yet, still——

As the detectives probed into the matter other coincidences began to develop. It was learned that Mrs. Lloyd had made a will in favour of her husband, and that he had insured her life. It was also noted that Lloyd had wasted no time after the inquest in requesting a lawyer at Shepherd's Bush to act for him in collecting the money. Neil had Lloyd watched with the most infinite precautions, and took steps to ensure that no money was paid to him. " Although," he wrote, " we have no real grounds for suspicion that the death was otherwise than accidental . . . it is desirable that he should not have the money in question for a while." He sent a cautious report up to Scotland Yard, headed " Suspicious Deaths," and pushed his inquiries in every direction.

Some weeks went by. Neil found that Mrs. Lloyd had been Margaret Lofty, the middle-aged daughter of a clergyman, whom Lloyd had met at Bristol and married at Bath. He also discovered that the Blackpool victim had been a twenty-five-year-old nurse named Alice Burnham, who had fallen in with a man named George Joseph Smith at Southsea. This man had married her in spite of the opposition of her

family, insured her life for five hundred pounds, and obtained a trifle more than a hundred pounds due to her from her family under threat of legal proceedings. By this time Neil had little doubt that Lloyd and Smith were one and the same person. He was morally certain that murder had been committed, but he was as yet unable to prove it. He felt it necessary that Lloyd should be put under restraint while more minute researches were being made. But to charge the man with the gravest offence known to the law until he was ready was a *faux pas* he was too shrewd to commit. A pretext had to be discovered. The inspector found one.

All unaware that he was even suspected, much less that a trap was prepared for him, Lloyd called one day at his lawyer's office. As he emerged he walked into the arms of Neil and two detective sergeants.

Neil took no chances, for he feared that his man might be armed, and he was hurriedly and efficiently searched.

"Are you John Lloyd?" demanded the inspector.

The prisoner willingly admitted the name. But he protested, when taxed, that he was not the George Smith whose wife had been found dead in a bath at Blackpool.

"Very well," said Neil. "I shall detain you, and, if you are identified, you will be charged with causing a false entry to be made in the marriage register at Bath."

The man was alert enough to see that Neil had something up his sleeve, as indeed he had. Among

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his traits was a vanity, a belief in his own cleverness, that never deserted him. He probably saw that persistence in a lie might tell against him. Whatever the detective might suspect there was no chance of proof that he had committed murder. He shrugged his shoulders.

"In that case," he said calmly, "I may as well say that my proper name is George Smith, and my wife died at Blackpool. But what of that? The entry in the register is not correct, but that is the only charge you can put against me."

"The question of any further charges is a matter of inquiry," replied Neil.

"Well," remarked Smith, "I must admit that the two deaths form a remarkable coincidence, but that is my hard luck."

Neil said little beyond some official reply. Until things were ripe he was satisfied to have his man under lock and key. So Smith was charged with faking a marriage register, and the detectives went resolutely on with their investigations.

It is realized by few people what heavy demands may be made upon a detective in most investigations. While Smith was kept under remand for three weeks the trail led all over England. More than forty towns were visited, and statements had to be taken from a hundred and fifty witnesses, the majority of whom were called at the trial. One detail alone of the investigations was the examination of twenty-one bank accounts of Smith and his victims.

Of what Neil and his men found the world knows. Smith was an ex-convict, a mean, illiterate, petty

thief, who had an extraordinary and inexplicable attraction for many women, on which for many years he had traded. It is said that the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall, who defended Smith at his trial, had a theory that the man hypnotized his victims.

There were cases which came to the knowledge of the detectives, but which were not referred to at the trial, of women deluded, swindled, and deserted. Of the graver crimes that were brought home to him the first was the murder of Miss Beatrice Munday, the daughter of a bank manager, with a little fortune of her own amounting to £2,500. This case was not known to the police until they had charged Smith with two other murders, when the similarity of method was brought to their attention.

Miss Munday was a woman of thirty-three. Smith married her—he had a wife living, by the way—in the name of Henry Williams, under a misapprehension. He found that her money was in the hands of trustees, and that he was unable to touch the capital. He, however, got all the cash from her that he could lay his hands on, and then absconded, leaving her penniless at Weymouth.

Some months later she met him by chance at Weston-super-Mare, and, still infatuated with him, agreed to a reconciliation. By various impudent methods that should have opened her eyes, he attempted to get still more money from her. Always there was that tantalizing £2,500, which was locked up just beyond his reach. He set his cunning mind to work to evolve ways and means. Thus, no doubt, he first dallied with the idea of murder.

They travelled about the country, and at last took a small house at Herne Bay. It was here that the man's schemes began to take a definite shape. There was no hope of possessing himself of his wife's property while she remained alive. If she died intestate, as the law stood, her property would go to her next-of-kin by blood, and Smith would get nothing. Worse than that, from the man's point of view, her trustees had the power to purchase an annuity for her, and in that event there would be no money for anyone when she died. As the judge put it at the trial: "In the vulgarest commercial terms, she was worth eight pounds a month while she lived, with the possibility of her willing £2,750 to somebody by will, but the trustees might defeat that by buying her an annuity."

Smith's position was simple. If the girl made a will in his favour the trustees might become awkward as soon as they knew of it. His only chance was that after a will was signed she should die—quickly.

She made a will in his favour, and he made one in hers. The day following this the man bought a cheap bath at a local ironmonger's—one of those which have to be filled by hand. It was characteristic of him that he haggled about the price, and succeeded in getting a shilling or two knocked off. Later, Arthur Neil took very careful measurements of that bath, and found out how many pails were needed to fill it, and how long it would take to carry them from the kitchen to the bathroom.

Smith's next step was to consult a doctor. He was perturbed about a fit with which he declared his wife

had been seized. The lady herself, when seen by the doctor, could not remember having had a fit, but she was apparently willing to accept her husband's word that it had taken place.

Then, at eight o'clock one Saturday morning, the doctor received a hurried summons. "Mrs. Williams" was dead. He found her lying on her back in the bath, her head beneath the water. He could do nothing.

An inquest duly took place, at which Smith and the doctor were the only witnesses, and the jury decided that "Mrs. Williams" had suffered from an epileptic fit while in her bath, and that thus she was drowned. So Smith managed to lay his hands on the money, which he turned first into gold and notes, then into house property, then again into cash, and finally into an annuity. All the complicated details of these transactions were minutely traced out by Neil and his assistants.

I propose to do little more here than give the broad results of the investigations of the detectives, which were concerned with many persons and many incidents. I shall carry the reader, therefore, straight to the following year, when Smith met Miss Alice Burnham at Southsea. Within a fortnight he had persuaded her to marry him.

The girl was induced to make her will in Smith's favour. Two days after this the pair went to Blackpool, and there sought lodgings. Smith declined to take rooms in one case as there was no bath, and ultimately they settled in apartments in Regent's Road. Here again a doctor was called in. The

wife had a headache. The doctor gave her a prescription.

The next morning the bride took a bath. Shortly afterwards Smith summoned the landlady, and said that he had called his wife and could get no reply. Together they went to the bathroom, where they found the hapless girl dead.

A perfunctory inquest was held a couple of days later, and a verdict of death by drowning was returned. Smith arranged a cheap funeral—"when they are dead they are done with," he remarked—and drew the insurance money under the will.

There was only one link wanting in the chain of evidence that Detective-Inspector Neil had so laboriously forged from the coincidence revealed to him by the newspaper cutting. True it was an important link on which much might depend. Could it be proved, in the legal sense of the term, that this sinister series of fatalities was part of a scheme of deliberate murder? It was on this point that Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the Home Office pathologist, was called in. With the aid of hospital nurses in bathing costumes, he made extensive experiments in reconstructing the crimes.

The bath in which Miss Burnham met her death at Blackpool he found measured eleven inches across near the bottom end and nineteen near the top end. The measurements of the dead woman were such that he deduced that in normal circumstances she would not have sat at the narrow end where she was found.

Sir Bernard was able to demonstrate the method of

murder. With one hand the assassin had suddenly submerged the head of the victim, at the same time thrusting the other hand under her knees and raising her legs out of water. In such a position in a slippery bath there would be no chance of any effective struggle. The method of seizing the woman had led to her body being inverted, and hence, when the body was found, it looked as if she had originally seated herself at the narrow end.

There was nearly a fatality during one of these experiments. One of the nurses, after her head had been submerged, suddenly stiffened, and she was revived only just in time.

So Smith was brought to his trial for murder—the longest and one of the most important cases held at the Old Bailey for sixty years. At Bow Street he hurled imprecations at the unmoved Inspector Neil from the dock, and his behaviour was little better at the Central Criminal Court until a stern rebuke from the judge reduced him to silence.

Not all the eloquence of Sir Edward Marshall Hall, the most experienced criminal barrister in England, could save him from the coil that was wound about him, and at the end of eight days he was sentenced to death. His appeal, as might have been expected, was futile, and he was duly executed.

“This conviction,” said the judge, amid a demonstration of approval from the jury, “a thoroughly right one in my opinion, is largely due to the care and assiduity with which Inspector Neil has pursued the threads of this complicated case, and I have pleasure in saying so in public.”

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Arthur Neil is now a detective-superintendent, and has handled many great murder cases. But I fancy he would admit that he has never done anything better than the bringing of George Joseph Smith to justice.

CHAPTER VIII

MR. VILLIERS MEETS A DUCHESS

HARRY VILLIERS did not know Mary, Duchess of Sutherland. Nor, for the matter of that, did the Duchess of Sutherland know Harry Villiers. They moved in different circles. For Harry knew his limitations, and he would probably have considered £30,000 worth of ducal jewels a little beyond his weight.

Not that Harry did not affect genteel society. He wore the name Villiers with an air as he wore his clothes. There were times when he might pass in any society. Nevertheless, he had his failings. A pretty face, a glass of wine—mayhap something stronger than wine—well they have been known to cause embarrassment to more able men than he.

Although nothing more than a railway sneak-thief, Villiers, under other names, had achieved some reputation in the underworld. He was not one of the great masters of crime like Adam Wirth or Dr. Bridgewater, but he had capacity. He can scarcely be blamed if he was at one time held up to the world as a sort of super-Raffles. I am, however, not denying him vanity. On the whole, no doubt, he found some satisfaction in that glory.

This, the crowning episode of his career, began in 1898. He had come to London from France, where misfortune had overtaken him. In these days the French police would, as a matter of course, inform

Scotland Yard of the release of such a man from one of their prisons. As it happened then no word was passed along. Villiers was unmolested in London, and he found solace for his troubles after the manner of his kind. He struck the high spots with reckless prodigality, until the stern exigencies of life were recalled to him by empty pockets.

He was, however, a man of resource. He paid a visit to Brighton, and there, at a well-known hotel, he ingratiated himself with a young widow of some little wealth. His smooth manners and adroit tongue soon won her regard. He had, he explained, large estates in England and France. Unscrupulous lawyers had tied up his possessions in this country, and in a year or so no foreigner in France would be allowed to hold landed property. Therefore he was the victim of a forced sale. By this unlucky contretemps he was short of ready money.

There is no need to emphasize this side of the story. The lady was persuaded to advance several hundreds of pounds on the security of worthless documents, and agreed to accompany her fascinating acquaintance on a trip to the Mediterranean. It was on this journey that he proposed to her, and was accepted. The marriage was to take place as soon as he had settled up his affairs, when he would be in a position to make her a handsome allowance.

From the lady's point of view there was just one flaw in the romance. Her lover was a trifle too persistent in his demands for money. They had their sea trip, and, a little reluctantly he agreed to go on to Paris to get his affairs straightened out. They hired

magnificent apartments in the Place Vendôme, and shortly after their arrival the man went to see "his notary, M. Bellbacker." Unfortunately, he explained on his return, M. Bellbacker was out of town and would not return for a fortnight. There was nothing to do but to wait.

Having thus gained a respite, the astute Mr. Villiers philosophically decided to wait upon events. He had had a thousand pounds or so out of his fiancée, and a man of brains could probably get more. He became a little careless, however. A gentleman who lived so precariously as Mr. Villiers should have known better than to leave letters lying about. It chanced that during his absence one day the lady read them, and the suspicion crossed her mind that she had been the victim of an adventurer. When he returned he was confronted by an angry woman. Soft words, dexterous excuses would not pacify her. What she wanted and what she insisted upon having was a return of her money. Either that or she would call in the police.

Then it was that Mr. Villiers lost his temper. Too well he knew the possibilities of disaster if the police were called in. He flourished a revolver, and, whether he intended it or not, he pressed the trigger. The lady was unhurt, but her shrieks and the report brought the police. In the middle of the confusion Mr. Villiers was whipped away to the police station. With one of those unaccountable revulsions of feeling to which the female of the human species is liable, she followed him to the police station and bailed him out.

He spent that night at an hotel, sending a note across to her that the whole thing was a misunderstanding. The next day he would see her and explain everything. As a matter of fact the astute Mr. Villiers took stock of his resources with a very different purpose in his mind. It was clear to him that the bubble had burst. Nothing further was likely to be gained from the lady. Better to make a clean break and leave her to make any explanation to the authorities.

So the next day—a Monday—found him at the Gare du Nord making inquiries as to the departure of the boat train. This was due to leave shortly before midday, and as he was early, he retired unostentatiously to the refreshment room to solace himself and to pass the time.

When he emerged the hour of departure was close at hand. There was the stir and bustle of departure. The professional instincts of Mr. Villiers were aroused by the sight of a small group of people near one of the carriage doors. They were clearly people of wealth and distinction. One of the party—obviously a lady's maid—was remarkably careful in her attention to a leather case. The watcher drew his conclusions. He paused, lit a cigarette, and from a distance quietly watched that box. He had an idea that opportunity was knocking at his door.

The maid put the box in the train and stepped outside to take some direction from her mistress. For a matter of seconds Mr. Villiers had a chance, and he took it. The exploit was as neat and complete as a conjuring trick. The officials hustled the passengers

to their seats. Not until the train was rushing at full speed along the flat lands between Chantilly and Amiens did the Duchess of Sutherland become aware that the box containing her jewel-case had gone. From Amiens—the first stop—the wires carried the news to Paris.

Meanwhile Mr. Villiers had strolled quietly out of the station with the box under his overcoat. He hailed a cab and drove to the Place Vendôme hopeful that his lady friend would be out. Luck served him. He had the apartment to himself for a while. There he ruined a good razor in cutting round the lock of the case.

He beheld the litter of gems with some bewilderment. As I have said, he was not one of that upper stratum of thieves who would have been able to deal with such a haul in prompt and businesslike fashion. This was beyond him. It flashed on his mind that the world would ring with the robbery. There would certainly be a hue and cry mightily unpleasant to its subject. The first and most imperative thing was to render the jewels as unidentifiable as possible. With this object he worked feverishly, using the back of his boot as a hammer to assist in breaking the gems from their settings. There were a few trinkets, however, which he could not resist retaining intact.

This occupied him for quite an hour, and meanwhile his mind was busy. By the time his fiancée had returned he had elaborated a plan. He took a handful of loose stones from his pocket and passed them to her. His air was that of an injured and misunderstood man. He had, he said, reflected on her unjust sus-

picious. To prove that he was a man of wealth he had retrieved the family jewels from his bankers. Perhaps she would believe him now.

At the risk of spoiling a romantic twist to this story it must be confessed that Mr. Villiers' actions were dictated rather by policy than affection. He had his "get-away" to consider. He must take no risk of being caught with the stolen goods actually upon him. If he could continue to dupe his fiancée he would be safer travelling with her. She would look after the jewels under the impression that they were heirlooms. He would get them from her when he was safe from any personal search. She was to be a catspaw.

A more clever man might have felt it a little hazardous to continue to gamble on the woman's credulity. She did, in fact, half accept the story. Some gold from the settings still remained on the carpet. She remembered this at a later stage. During the afternoon the papers were full of the great jewel robbery. Her misgivings increased.

Mr. Villiers preened himself that he had met a great crisis with presence of mind and ability. He felt himself entitled to a little relaxation. That evening one bottle of wine led to another, and he began to talk with queer ellipses. He commented upon the robbery. He expressed the opinion that it was a clever affair—the Duchess of Sutherland must have "lost a packet." Still, there were other jewels in the world. If a certain lady could keep quiet she might have as many jewels as any duchess.

The phrase struck her like a pistol shot. She was not now quite as ingenuous as she had been. At

another time, perhaps, Villiers might have noted her suppressed agitation. Leaving him on the plea that she wanted to dress for a theatre, she hurried to a police station. There, in voluble excitement, she told of the swindle that had been practised on herself, and her suspicions that Villiers was the author of the big robbery.

She spoke very bad French. The officer detached to deal with her spoke little English. He was a very sophisticated man, and he was busy. It was perfectly clear to him that he was listening to the incoherent outpourings of a jealous woman. He smoothed her down with Gallic politeness, and promised to send a detective to look into the matter. There the matter was left, and the lady determined that it would be tactful to spend an hour or so looking at the shops.

The detective duly visited the flat. Mr. Villiers, observing his advent, awoke to the situation. He lay low, and the officer was informed that he was out. There were a few formal inquiries, and the latter left. After all, it was only a formality. No one could seriously imagine that this trumpety affair had any connection with the robbery that was agitating the police of two great countries.

The luck was surely with Mr. Villiers. The path that he had left was so plain, so obvious, that it was overlooked. Very seldom have the highly efficient French police bungled as they did in this case. They were over-subtle. They had made up their minds that the coup was the planned work of an organized gang of clever specialists. The Duchess, they believed, had

been shadowed for weeks, and as the gang was well financed it was unlikely that any attempt to dispose of the jewels would be made until the hue and cry had died down. Their calculations did not take into account an accidental theft. From their point of view such a man as Villiers had neither the brain nor the experience for a crime of this kind.

Thus, at the other end of the investigation, Scotland Yard was left to grope in the dark. The Sûreté had not even informed them that Villiers was at large. They knew nothing of the story told by Villiers' lady friend. Practically all the information that originally came to them was misleading. The hypothesis of a gang, the idea of the French detectives, was even supported by rumours that came to their agents. The vanity of the underworld has its drawbacks from the angle of the detective. There were at least three groups of crooks who bragged that they had been concerned in the theft.

Three men of great detective quality were thrown upon the case. They were Inspector Dinnie, who later became the chief of a great overseas police force; Inspector Frank Froest, who was to become the executive chief of the Criminal Investigation Department; and Inspector Walter Dew, who will be recalled as the man who arrested Crippen. No three men in the world could have been drawn together who had greater knowledge of crime and criminals. Had they been in possession of the least tangible clue it is not unreasonable to suppose that Villiers would have been under arrest in a matter of hours.

However, they had nothing. Very quickly they

made it certain that those persons suspected had nothing to do with the crime. Then they proceeded further by a method of elimination. Every professional thief of distinction was looked up, and his movements about the time of the robbery checked. Nor did these men—unlike their French confrères—overlook the possibility of a chance haul. They probed into the movements of well-known railway thieves. Thus, Harry Villiers came in for scrutiny. He was known to the Yard by a variety of names—Villiers, Johnson, Wilson, and others—but the men of the C.I.D. commonly referred to him by the nickname conferred upon him by the underworld as Harry the Valet. He had once posed, with some success, as a gentleman's servant in bringing off a "touch," and this distinction had then been bestowed upon him. There was nothing very thrilling in his record—the theft of a pocket-book from an overcoat at the Holborn Restaurant, the purloining of a lady's handbag, an attempt on a diamond merchant's wallet, and the pilfering of some banknotes. It was discovered that he had recently been released from a French prison, and that since then trace had been lost of him. This latter fact might well be significant.

At that moment he was one among several others whom the detectives suspected on general principles. The Yard men made persistent casts for a scent. All known receivers of stolen jewellery were closely watched, but little hope was attached to this, for "fences" are the most wary and slippery class of criminal with whom the police have to deal. A description of the stolen jewels was published, but

gems in their settings and loose stones are two entirely different things.

The weeks went by. From somewhere on the South Coast there trickled to Scotland Yard the news that a gentleman very lavish with money, and with a quantity of jewels in his possession, was moving from town to town. Vague though this was, steps were taken to follow up this person. In a little, the police knew that it was Harry the Valet. So far nothing that would constitute legal evidence came to light, but it did not need the wit of a Sherlock Holmes to realize that Harry had run into a streak of luck. It might have been the Gare du Nord affair, it might have been something else. The coincidence, however, was too striking to be ignored.

All roads lead ultimately to London, for crooks as for other people. Thither Mr. Villiers gravitated in course of time, quite confident that he had shaken off all pursuit and covered his traces. He had been careful when he left Paris not to travel direct to London. The journey had been made by stages. He had taken a ticket at a local station, stayed at the place for a night, and booked to another station the following day. So he arrived within reach of Boulogne, and crossed the Channel without arousing suspicion. The police were more concerned with passengers direct from Paris. At Boulogne, Calais, and Brighton he succeeded in raising funds on some small portion of his booty. His jaunt round the south coast was also part of his scheme for confusing the trail. He reached London at last by the same manner in which he had left Paris—one station at a time.

He could not, of course, be aware that there was quiet rejoicing at Scotland Yard among three men at his arrival. They knew their man. Sooner or later he would make a false step and their task would be so much simpler now that he was within easy reach. It could only be a question of time.

It was, I believe, after he had reached London that the Scotland Yard men, in tracing his movements backwards, heard of the young widow who had been his companion in Paris. They sought her out and she told her story. This time she and the police were talking a common language, and no doubt remained in the minds of Dinnie and his companions that they held the key to the mystery.

Nevertheless, all this, though it was convincing enough to the detectives, was not material on which they felt inclined to act hastily. Something more decisive was required. A rash move might have spoiled everything. If Villiers was arrested out of hand, and none of the stolen gems were found in his possession, it would be hard to connect him with the robbery on the mere ground of opportunity, and his hints to the lady. Dinnie could afford to be patient. His man was within the net. It only needed that the meshes should be examined before it was hauled in.

Utterly unconscious of the activities of Scotland Yard, Villiers, complacently confident that all was well, saw no reason why he should not enjoy himself while he carried on negotiations with the receivers. He spent money royally. There was one West End restaurant at which his bill for a single day amounted to £50—a reckless as well as an extravagant episode

for a man whose policy should have been not to attract attention. Then there was "Handsome Polly." She was the wife of a pickpocket as well as an artist's model—her portrait has figured on the walls of the Royal Academy. Villiers, who could not resist a pretty woman, was a victim to her bow and spear. It was at her caprice that one evening he bought champagne for the whole of the habitués of a shady night club. That fatuous vanity of criminals which sometimes marches hand in hand with the most audacious cunning made him loose-lipped. He talked just a little too much. To Dinnie there came by devious ways tales that made him resolve that the time was ripe.

If this was a story of imagination instead of fact I might here bridge a tantalizing gap. One may guess that that stealthy figure of the underworld, the informant, played some part in the development of the plot. At eight o'clock one morning three men sauntered casually into the retired and respectable shades of Cathcart Road, South Kensington. They moved purposefully to a three-storied, double-fronted house. In the door someone had considerably left a latchkey. The mystery of that opportune key is still shrouded in silence, but it may be assumed that its presence was not unexpected by the visitors.

One of them—it was Detective-Inspector Dinnie—cautiously opened the door a few inches. He closed it again and made a gesture to his companions. The door was secured within by a chain. The detectives retired, taking the key with them, and held the house under observation for a matter of twenty minutes.

Then they returned. The chain had been removed and they walked into the house.

They moved quickly to the first floor. There, outside one of the bedroom doors, they were confronted by a young woman who said that she was the landlady of the house. "We are police officers," said Dinnie. "We wish to speak to a man we believe to be in this room."

He turned the handle as he spoke, but the door was locked. Doggedly the woman declined to open it. A stentorian summons to the occupant of the room met with no reply. The detectives were in no mood to boggle at trifles. With a crash the door went down before their combined onslaught. They tumbled into the room. Mr. Villiers, dressed with his usual nicety, was standing at the foot of the bed to receive them. He was a trifle pale, but quite calm.

"You know who we are?" said Dinnie.

"Oh yes," agreed the other, with a shrug of the shoulders. He knew that he was beaten. As they searched him he smiled with a whimsical recollection of his own failings. "You would not have got me if it had not been for the women and drink," he remarked. "I was a fool."

No one troubled to deny him. His foolishness had been carried to the length of still retaining some of the loot—which was exactly what they had hoped. It was not a great deal, but it was enough. There was a ring, for instance, with one large diamond and one large sapphire. A number had been scratched on the ring by the jeweller who had originally sold it. Attempts had been made to erase this number ; but

with a powerful light and a microscope it revealed its secret.

Villiers had enough sense to realize that there was no escape from the evidence that was amassed against him. Brought to trial at the Clerkenwell Sessions he pleaded guilty, but resolutely refused to tell where the bulk of the jewellery had gone. One may concede him, at least, the merit of loyalty to his receivers, for he knew that his silence put him in peril of a much heavier sentence. He was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

CHAPTER IX

A MASTERPIECE OF DETECTION

A CLASSIC piece of detective work was that carried out by M. Gustave Macé in his early days before he became Chef de la Sûreté in Paris. He was then one of those functionaries peculiar to Continental police, a Commissary—a lawyer whose duties were those of an investigating magistrate.

Pieces of human flesh had, over a series of days, been picked out of the Seine and the St. Martin Canal. These were followed by the discovery of a human leg in the sixty-foot well of a restaurant-keeper in the Rue Princesse. M. Macé, as Commissary of the district, was informed and immediately began an investigation.

The leg had been wrapped in a parcel which had been cut about and partly destroyed by the restaurant-keeper while opening it. Macé decided to do some more fishing in the well, and by the exercise of infinite care managed to retrieve intact another parcel. This was also a human leg. Both these legs were still covered with the upper part of long cotton stockings, to which had been sewn a pair of men's socks. One of the socks was marked: “+ B +.”

Medical examination showed that the remains, which were probably those of a woman, had been in the well about a month. They had been skilfully severed above the knee by someone who used a

butcher's knife. That was all. The well was emptied, but no further remains were found; and Macé, a young and untried hand, found himself with a first-class mystery on his hands.

His first official report ran: "The human limbs are not anatomical specimens; they seem to have belonged to a person of the female sex, and were separately tied up in a piece of black, glazed calico, measuring a square yard, the extremities of which were fastened in knots, allowing the ends of the material to hang down like the ears of a rabbit, as with large bales of merchandise. This method of wrapping and tying parcels by double fastenings, top and bottom, is especially in use among tailors and sempstresses, but more particularly among the former; and from the mode in which these knots have been tied, it seems to me that we are justified in believing that a tailor had to do with them, for sempstresses have a way of joining the four ends of their wrappers in the shape of a cross when doing up goods to deliver to their customers. The coverings, therefore, which enveloped the legs seem to me to have been those of a journeyman tailor.

"The proprietors of first-class establishments use silken wrappers, tailors of an inferior position 'satin-de-Chine,' while journeymen, working at home, use black, glazed calico, because of its trifling cost. I propose, therefore, to direct my search among the latter. . . ."

Macé had satisfied himself that the mark on the stockings was not a laundry mark. The officials of the Morgue reported that a few days before Christmas

a human thigh wrapped up in a piece of a blue jersey, edged with black, had been taken from the river and deposited with them. A day or two after this, it was recalled, a man had been stopped by policemen at an early hour in the morning, near the Rue Princesse, carrying a big parcel in one hand and a hamper in the other. He said the packages contained hams ; and, as he gave a plausible reason for his movements at that hour, he was allowed to go.

The first line of inquiry on which Macé worked was to investigate all the cases of disappearance that had been reported to the police in the previous six months. There were 122 in all, but most of these could be accounted for, and Macé ultimately found himself concentrating on three. These were all women, and all of them he found alive and well.

Then it was that Macé discovered that part of his data was wrong. A more expert examination of the legs put it beyond doubt that they were not those of a woman at all. Dr. Tardieu, an eminent authority, declared that the legs and the remains that had been found at other places all belonged to the same person, who must have been an elderly man. The dismemberment, in his opinion, had been done by a chopper.

Chagrined at the waste of effort this error had occasioned, Macé turned to another possibility. He endeavoured to find if a tailor had lodged in the Rue Princesse. Thus he was brought into contact with a garrulous old woman who acted as concierge of the house which drew its water supply from the well. No tailors had lodged in the vicinity ; but there had been a girl—a waistcoat-maker—of whom the concierge

had a small opinion. She was known as Mathilde Dard, although her real name was Gaupe, and her main business was the making of wedding waistcoats for a little tailor.

At the word tailor Macé became interested. He discovered that the man brought the girl work, and that he used to fetch her drinking-water from the well—to the annoyance of the concierge, who had scolded him for spilling the water on her stairs. The girl had since left, no one knew where. But Macé learned that among her visitors had been a chemist's assistant. He found this youth at an adjacent shop and from him got the information that Mathilde had become a cabaret singer. He could not, however, give her address.

The formidable organization of the Paris police was put in motion, and before another day had passed Mademoiselle Gaupe had been found and brought to Macé. She was a piquant little person, by Macé's account, and readily answered his questions. She admitted that she had been a sempstress, and gave the names of six tailors for whom she had worked.

"Who was it that used to bring you your water up occasionally, when you were living in the Rue Princesse?" asked Macé.

"That was Voirbo."

"Where does he live?"

"Before he married he used to live in the Rue Mazarin. I don't know where he hangs out now."

"What was Monsieur Voirbo's way of living?"

"Rather a puzzling one. He worked but little, lounged about a good deal, and led a pretty fast

life. He was a very strange man; he always had money.”

Macé questioned her about Voirbo's friends. She said she knew none of them, but had seen him at a café with a little old man whom he used to address by his Christian name as Père Désiré. He had once introduced her with jocularly to an old woman whom he described as Désiré's aunt, and addressed as “Mother Bandage.” This woman, said Mathilde, lived in the Rue de Nesles.

An officer was at once despatched to fetch this woman, who proved to be a widow, a manufacturer of bandages, and whose real name was Bodasse. She readily admitted that she had a nephew named Désiré Bodasse. He was, however, only a relative by marriage and much older than she was. He was an upholsterer of eccentric and mean habits, who had saved enough to bring in an income of 1,800 francs a year. She had not seen him for a month, but that had not alarmed her as he was capricious in his movements.

She was taken to the Morgue, and unhesitatingly recognized the stockings. She herself had attached the socks to them, and she also had stitched the mark “+ B +” upon them in red cotton. She also said that Désiré had a distinct scar on one leg, the result of falling on a broken bottle. She identified a piece of the cloth found with the legs as having been part of her nephew's trousers—made for him by a friend Pierre. The jersey in which the thigh had been discovered was also Désiré's. She herself had sewn the black edging to it.

The next step was a visit to Désiré Bodasse's lodging. This was on the third floor of an old house in the Rue Dauphin. Macé knocked without result. Inquiries from the concierge and his wife elicited that Bodasse sometimes locked himself in his room and refused to answer any callers. Letters were pushed under the door. But the hopes that Macé entertained of being near a solution of the mystery were shattered the next moment when the wife of the concierge declared that she had seen him in the street that very morning. Moreover, the previous night there had been a light in his room, and she and her husband had seen a shadow on the curtains.

This tale shook Madame Bodasse, who was inclined to think that she had made a mistake in her identification of the articles at the Morgue. It began to look as if the investigation had reached another cul-de-sac. Leaving a note for Bodasse, if perchance he should still be alive, Macé took the trail after Voirbo.

He went to the address that had been given by Mathilde Gaupe, but Voirbo had gone from there. From the landlady, from a woman who had cleaned Voirbo's room the commissary learned something more of Voirbo. He was a man of dissipated habits who had recently married for a second time. He and Désiré Bodasse had been inseparable friends, and yet Désiré had not been present at the marriage. Voirbo had complained that the "old curmudgeon" had refused to lend him ten thousand francs to start house-keeping upon.

Here was the hint of a motive. The following day

Madame Bodasse had reverted to her original opinion that the articles she had identified had belonged to her nephew. Macé determined to put the matter to the test, and accordingly the room that had been occupied by Bodasse was forced.

The place was in perfect order save for a slight layer of dust on the furniture. Even the clock was going. The ends of seventeen wax matches were in the grate. On the mantelshef were two cardboard candle boxes, constructed to hold eight candles each. One unused candle remained in them. Fifteen candles had, therefore, been used, and two tall brass candlesticks showed the remains of many burnt-out candles. It was apparent to Macé that on fifteen evenings someone had visited the room and lit a candle to make the neighbours believe that the place was inhabited. And there was the hat, the stick, and the watch of Bodasse still in the room.

Madame Bodasse was called in and indicated a secret drawer in a desk, where, she said, Bodasse kept his pocket-book with his securities. Macé opened the drawer. It was empty.

Continuing his search of the apartment he opened the back of the big silver watch hanging at the head of the bed. There fell from it a flimsy red piece of paper, on which was written in pencil a list of numbers of an issue of Italian Government stock. They were, unluckily, bearer securities which could be negotiated as readily as banknotes.

Leaving officers in charge of the room, Macé swung back to the trail of Voirbo. At the man's old lodgings in the Rue Mazarin the landlady repeated that she

had seen nothing of him since the day he had removed. That was on January 5. On New Year's Day he had paid two quarters' rent, one of which had been in arrear since October.

"With what money did he pay?" asked Macé.

"With a five hundred franc Italian stock certificate payable to bearer." She gave the name of a money changer where the certificate had been cashed, and from this man Macé obtained the number of the certificate. As he expected, it was one of the missing securities.

Another talk with Voirbo's old servant brought out a fresh and significant fact. She had reached his rooms at eight o'clock on the morning of December 17, and to her surprise found Voirbo dressed and ready to go out. More than that, the bed was made, the room had been scrubbed out, so that the tiles were quite damp, and an enormous fire was alight in the stove. The room reeked of petroleum.

Voirbo was ready for the charwoman's comment. The previous night he had refused to mend some clothes for an old woman, who had spitefully let fall a bottle of oil on the floor. Fearful of fire, Voirbo had thrown water on the floor, and spent the night with his friend Bodasse. He had returned in the early morning to clear up. The strange part of this was that Voirbo, in the charwoman's experience, had never before done any work that could be left to her.

Macé now waited for Voirbo to walk into Bodasse's lodgings, where a trap had been laid for him. A week went by. One of the detectives was seen in conversation with Voirbo, and Macé called him to account for

not reporting the circumstance. Then it appeared that they had not dreamed that Voirbo could be the man who was wanted. He had been employed as a police spy, and was on most intimate terms with the watchers, who had explained their business to him.

Thus Voirbo had been placed on his guard. There was no more reason for approaching him indirectly, and a summons was, therefore, sent for him to attend at the commissary's office. The tailor obeyed.

"Voirbo," said Macé, "seemed to me the type of a broken-down stockbroker, or of a commercial traveller in adulterated wines. Thirty years of age, short in stature, rather corpulent, he possessed a full face, dark eyes and complexion, a long and thick nose—suggestive of mental and bodily strength—small ears, strong hands, short, fat fingers. His hair, cut very short, was, like his moustache, black. Everything in the man's countenance pointed to energy and will."

Voirbo, with composure, answered the formal questions about himself and his friend, Bodasse. He hinted that he had offered his services to the political section of police, and had only refrained from coming to Macé because he understood that, in consequence of the youth and inexperience of the other, the case was to be put into other hands.

Macé noted the sneer. He calmly admitted that he was on the point of withdrawing from the case when he had heard Voirbo's name favourably mentioned, and had resolved to seek his assistance. Voirbo consented, no doubt much tickled at the ingenuous and inept young commissary.

“Devote a few of your evenings to discovering a solution of this mystery,” asked Macé. “If after this final effort the results are not more satisfactory, I shall give in and regret ever having meddled with so mysterious an affair. I tell you frankly, Monsieur Voirbo, you are my sole and last hope.”

Voirbo patronizingly enunciated a theory of jealousy to account for the murder. With the air of one doing a favour he accepted a hundred francs as expenses towards the investigation he was to conduct. And he certainly tried to give value for money by concocting a case against a sot, named Rifer, whom he plied with drink till he reached a stage of madness. Rifer was arrested during a fit of mania, and died the following day in an asylum. Voirbo imagined that there was an end of his troubles.

Voirbo determined to call upon Macé to see if that functionary was dropping the case now that the supposed assassin was dead. Meantime, Macé had determined that the farce had gone far enough, and had determined to put Voirbo under arrest.

But Voirbo was first. The morning following Rifer's death he was waiting at Macé's office at eight in the morning. That was the hour of Macé's arrival, for he was usually in front of his staff. Macé greeted his visitor amiably, but his mind was working swiftly. He was a small man, and no physical match for Voirbo. Yet he was disinclined to postpone the arrest.

He offered the other the morning papers, and with a word of excuse began to open his correspondence. On the plea that a telegram demanded an immediate

reply he dashed off a note to his secretary. This gave precise instructions to have all exits from the building locked, to have a messenger remove the fire-irons on the pretext of replenishing the fire, and at the ring of a bell to have officers enter the room and guard the doors.

He placed this in an envelope and dropped it on the secretary's desk in full view of Voirbo. Half an hour had gone; there were still thirty minutes to be gained before help could arrive. He held Voirbo in talk about Rifer's connection with the case. Voirbo mentioned that he had obtained the address of a girl who he alleged had been implicated in the crime. As he fumbled in his pocket for the paper on which he had written the address a card fell out which Macé picked up and politely returned, noting as he did so that it was that of a firm of shipping agents. He concluded that Voirbo was on the point of departure from the country.

The secretary entered and took away the letter. A little later he returned and indicated that all was ready. Macé touched the bell. The secretary turned the key in one door and two detectives entered by another. Voirbo started from his seat, but sat down again as he saw the futility of resistance. But, although he was pale, he stoutly asserted his innocence. He blandly argued the question at length, and parried with skill the questions put to him. When he was searched, a ticket for a passage from Havre to New York in the name of Saba was found upon him. There was a small razor-blade concealed in the lining of his hat.

The next step was the examination of the premises at which Voirbo now lived. His wife, a fragile little woman, had no suspicion of his true character. She had never heard of Bodasse. When Voirbo married her he was in possession of Italian bonds to the value of ten thousand francs. These were his share of the marriage settlement, and, added to her dowry of fifteen thousand francs in French bearer securities, had been deposited in a strong box of which Voirbo kept the key. This box was at once forced open and found to be empty.

A very thorough search of the place disclosed some significant things. A tin case hidden in a cask of wine was found to contain the bonds stolen from Bodasse. In the kitchen were a butcher's chopper, and string of the same kind as that with which the parcels in the well were tied. There were other things which indicated that Voirbo had been concerned in more crimes than one.

Macé broke the news of the result of his search to Voirbo, and hinted that a photograph would be taken to be used for identification. Against this the prisoner strenuously protested, declaring that he would make such grimaces as to destroy all value as a likeness. He insisted on his right to accompany Macé to the search of his former lodgings in the Rue Mazarin on the following day.

With a clear understanding of the manner in which the furniture had been arranged during Voirbo's tenancy, Macé began his search. The only point at which a person would have been able to move freely was round a circular table that had stood in the

centre of the room. Macé decided that it was on this table that the grim work of dismemberment had been done. Let Macé tell the rest of the story.

“ You are now going to see how very important an accessory may be in a criminal case and how the most trifling detail may serve to complete an inquiry. Observe that in the matter we have in hand, accessories and hardly anything else have led us up to the truth. In the victim’s room candles are lit and the clock is kept going, two accessories of which the object was to put off as long as possible the discovery of the crime, and by that means to keep suspicion away from the criminal. At 26, Rue Lamartine we find a whole pile of newspapers. Some of these contain reports of the trial of the butcher Avinain ; while others relate to the murder of Bernard of Auber-villiers, and of the servant girl, Marie Carton. The authors of both these crimes have remained unknown. These loose sheets may seem valueless, but on examining them carefully we find them to be powerful and most important accessories. Bodasse’s murderer is an imitator of Avinain. Like him he cut up his victim. Avinain confessed ; but at the foot of the scaffold a cry escaped him, a warning to future murderers : ‘ Never confess ! ’—and in accordance with this precept, Bodasse’s murderer has made up his mind to deny everything. But his denial is of no avail. We are on the track of the villain who murdered Marie Carton, and this at the very moment when he was about to be shielded by the act of limitation, and we shall discover the man who cut old Bernard’s throat. In short, in this very room which was once

Voirbo's, it is again an accessory which is definitely going to reveal the name of Bodasse's murderer.

"Stretching out my arm, I took from the table a bottle full of water, and continued: 'In this room there exists a perceptible slope from the window to the alcove. Assuming that a body was cut up here, and that there was an abundant flow of blood, the blood, following the direction of this declivity, must have flowed towards the bed and there formed a pool. I am now going to pour the contents of this bottle on the vacant spots of the tiled floor; the water will follow the same course as the blood did, and, wherever it stops, we will find material evidence of the crime. The water-bottle will be the tell-tale accessory.'"

As he emptied the contents of the bottle on to the floor the demeanour of Voirbo changed. He fidgeted uneasily, his face was white, and he breathed with difficulty. The water flowed towards the bed, under which it collected in a great pool. The exact spot thus indicated was sponged dry and a workman was ordered to remove ten tiles, around and beneath which dried blood could be distinctly seen. These tiles were later subjected to tests which showed beyond doubt that they had been stained with human blood.

Voirbo's agitation had increased as Macé's experiment concluded. He was trembling violently, and when the other requested him to hold a candle while a cupboard was searched his fingers refused their office.

"Don't continue," he cried. "I am guilty. I will

tell you—you alone—but not here. Take me away quickly out of this accursed place.”

They took him away, and as he and his escort reached the street he made a desperate dash for liberty, and was only recaptured after a long chase. But at the commissary's office Voirbo elaborated his confession. He had determined to possess himself of Bodasse's fortune, and to that end had lured the other to his rooms, where he had stunned him from behind with a heavy flat-iron. Then he had completed his grim work and disposed of the body bit by bit. The details of his crime proved to fit in exactly with all the deductions that had been made by Macé.

Voirbo refused to discuss the other two murders of which he was suspected, and after a brief appearance before an examining magistrate, was remitted to Mazas Prison. There, by some means that was never explained, he managed to conceal a razor blade in a loaf of bread, and with this he committed suicide.

CHAPTER X

TWENTY-ONE GOLD COINS

IT is the fashion to compare the British detective unfavourably with his Continental confrères. Time was when the French were pointed to as the great criminal investigators of the world ; nowadays it is more frequently the German police machine with its multitude of mechanical devices that we are called upon to behold and admire.

I may be prejudiced, but I confess to an insular belief that Scotland Yard has always been the organization most to be dreaded by the criminal. Its methods may, on occasion, be less highly polished than those of its rivals, but it makes few mistakes. I do not doubt that the record of Scotland Yard in the solution of great mysteries is higher than that of any police force in the world, in spite of the fact that the laws of this country do not allow detectives the latitude which is afforded to Continental police.

The fact is that the British detective is not "showy." Even when he has done some subtle and pertinacious work in some great mystery he hides himself behind the phrase, "From information received," and that is all the public usually knows about it ; nine-tenths of his labours are not legal evidence, and there is no need to talk about them in court.

Now and again, however, a point is brought out which gives some hint of the story beneath the case.

This brings us, in the terminology of Sherlock Holmes, to the tale of the Twenty-one Gold Coins.

Scotland Yard was an anxious place about the middle of July, 1910. Dr. Crippen had taken to flight, and a worldwide search was being made for him; an actor named Anderson, or Atherstone, had been shot dead in mysterious circumstances in a Battersea flat; and the provincial police had asked for help in unravelling the mystery of the murder of an old woman named Mrs. Isabella Wilson in a second-hand shop at Slough.

Any one of these affairs called for the best brains in the detective service. The public were hypnotized by the dramatic hue and cry for Crippen, who was ultimately run down by Detective-Inspector Walter Dew. The Battersea case came in for some slight newspaper attention, but it was never solved. And the Slough murder was almost obscured. Yet from the angle of the professional detective it was, perhaps, the most interesting of the three.

It is the custom for a chief detective-inspector to be sent from Scotland Yard when his services are asked for through the Home Office by a local police force. There was available at this time an officer of this rank who had won his spurs while a subordinate detective by his adroitness in aiding to solve the Moat Farm mystery, in which a man named Dougal was sent to the gallows. This was Elias Bower.

He was a typical Scotland Yard detective—a strongly-built, middle-aged man, of resource, experience, and industry. Like his colleagues, he did not pretend to the omniscience of the book detective, but

he had keen observation and was capable of putting two and two together. Also he knew—again like all Scotland Yard men—where to find those who could tell him what he himself did not know. That is really all that matters to the successful detective.

He went down to Slough, accompanied by an aide-de-camp—Detective-Sergeant Burton. There he was put in possession of the few facts upon which he had to work.

Mrs. Wilson was a pleasant, vigorous old woman verging on seventy. She carried on a business as a dealer in second-hand clothes at a shop in the High Street, Slough. She had no known enemies. This was the woman who was found by a neighbour one Friday afternoon lying dead in a little back kitchen behind her shop. There could be no question that she had been murdered.

No great flight of imagination was necessary to reconstruct the crime. She had whiled away the lassitude of a summer afternoon by a short nap, and while she was asleep someone had stolen in and attacked her with a heavy weapon. She grappled with her assailant, but, although she was a strong woman for her age, she was overmatched, and soon went down before a shower of blows. Even then she was merely stunned. Before she could recover herself a cushion was lashed tightly about her face. Her hands were secured with a piece of silk scarf, and some attempt had been evidently made to secure her feet, for a length of string was found about one ankle.

Thus she was suffocated. The detectives found her dress torn and disarranged—eloquent testimony of her

desperate fight for life—and beneath one of its folds there was discovered an empty purse. A watch had been torn from the chain round about her neck, and one of her earrings had been snapped from its hook.

Here was no difficulty of motive. Bower at once saw that he had to deal with a case of brutal murder for robbery. Superficially, the case looked simple enough. But, by a paradox, it was that apparent simplicity that made the matter more complex. The sophisticated burglar, with his array of scientific appliances, is easier to trace than the casual sneak-thief who steals a purse through a window carelessly left open. Slough was on a main road for tramps passing to or from London. What more possible than that some predatory gentleman had seen opportunity in the old woman dozing behind her shop? How, except by a fluke, was it possible to find such a man, and by what miracle could evidence be gathered to support any charge against him? No one had been seen to enter or leave the shop at about the time of the crime. There certainly could not be any direct identification.

The expert practitioners from Scotland Yard made a methodical and close inspection of the room. Being men accustomed to look facts squarely in the face, they were not optimistic. Unless something from which a start might be made could be found within those four walls they might as well give up hope of bringing the murderer to justice. They did find something.

From the table Bower picked up a scrap of paper which had been carelessly thrown there. The cylin-

drical shape which it had assumed told that it had, in all likelihood, been a wrapping for a number of coins. Under close scrutiny, Bower was able to discern the indentations made by milled edges. He could even count the impressions. There had been twenty-one coins in the package—two of them smaller than the rest. The significance of this was emphasized by inquiries that showed Mrs. Wilson had been in the habit of carrying in the pocket of her dress a sum of twenty pounds in gold. It was a reasonable deduction that the paper had contained nineteen sovereigns and two half-sovereigns.

The importance of this point was not so apparent at that time as it later became. The paper, however, was carefully preserved. Bower was, no doubt, more impressed at the moment with the result of the medical examination of the body of the dead woman. On one of her hands there was a dark stain, which tests showed to be blood. Beneath one of the finger-nails was a minute fragment of human skin. Here was an inference which could scarcely be resisted. In the course of the death-struggle, the assassin must have been severely scratched—in all probability on the face.

With the help of Superintendent Pearman of the Bucks Constabulary, Bower raked the district. For an area of miles search was made for a man with a scratched face. There was a remote chance, but Bower did not pin too much faith to it. As it happened, nothing very helpful came from this. No tramp with a scratched face was found, and Bower and his men turned their energies into other directions.

In this type of case, local gossip is not ignored by the experienced detective. There are times when it is malicious, or fantastic, or ridiculous. Yet failing anything more reliable or definite, it sometimes points a finger in a direction that might otherwise have been overlooked. So one may be brought to a cul-de-sac—or to a road that reaches the end of the journey.

Someone mentioned to Bower the name of William Brooks. William Brooks was a young man who had served in the Army. His father had been manager of the shop next door to that of Mrs. Wilson, but the family had left Slough a month or two before. But on the day of the murder William Brooks had been seen in Slough.

To a logical mind there were many reasons why this should not suggest itself as of vital importance. William Brooks might have been a very estimable person, and his presence in the town a mild coincidence. Or, again, it might be that the informant had been deceived by a casual likeness. It might be that the date of the young man's visit to town had been mistaken. There was nothing but this remark to suggest that the young man had any possible connection with the crime.

Nevertheless, with nothing else in sight, Bower was willing to pursue any trail, however vague. He set out first to convince himself that Brooks had really been in Slough on that fatal Friday. On that point he was soon satisfied. There were four persons who had seen Brooks. One of these was a policeman, another was a newsagent, and there were a publican and his wife.

Bower began to think that there might be something in this after all. Here was a man who had the opportunity of knowing of Mrs. Wilson's habits—who probably knew that she carried gold on her person—and who had exceptional knowledge of the neighbourhood and the neighbours. It might, as I have said, be coincidence. Still, in looking for a murderer, coincidences have to be accounted for.

Certainly Brooks would have to be asked one or two questions—if he could be found. It would be necessary for him to give a precise account of his actions between noon and four o'clock on the day of the murder. And if he had a scratch on his face . . . well, Bower would distinctly want to know how it had happened.

There is a wide gap between suspicion—even stronger suspicion than existed in this case—and legal proof that will justify an arrest and satisfy a jury. Bower had as yet nothing but suspicion. But he knew that in ninety-nine of a hundred murder mysteries the proofs that clinch guilt or innocence are linked together after, rather than before, a detention or arrest. The great thing is to lay hands upon the person against whom the weight of suspicion points.

So he concentrated on the hunt for Brooks. This was complicated, because, as he soon discovered, Brooks was not the real name of the man he was hunting. The other had served in the Army under that name, but his real name was Broome. No one seemed to know where he had gone when he left Slough, and there was trouble in getting a line on him.

But pertinacious inquiries, although they did not

succeed in locating the actual hiding-place of the wanted man, did reveal the addresses of certain friends and relatives whom he might be expected sooner or later to visit. These places were unobtrusively watched—particularly a house in Harlesden, which it was anticipated was the most likely spot.

It was not easy to "keep observation" in a quiet district. Sure it was that if Broome was deliberately keeping out of the way because of a guilty conscience he would not be likely to turn up at a house which was under obvious surveillance. So the consent of the vicar of a neighbouring church was obtained in setting a trap. From the tower of the church it was possible to obtain a clear view of everyone who entered or left the house. Here an observation post was established, in which Detective-Sergeant Burton took his place, while a code of signals was arranged with Bower, who remained below.

One Sunday, during morning service, Bower received the signal. He strolled carelessly to the vicinity of the house, and there, sure enough, was his man walking with a girl. The detective ranged alongside, and touched the suspect on the arm.

"Your name is Brooks," he said, as one making a statement rather than asking a question. "I am a police officer, and I should like a word with you."

The young man started, and the girl gave a quick exclamation. But the grip of the detective was now on the other's arm. By this time, too, Burton had abandoned the tower and was nearing them. The girl was sent away, and Broome was invited to accompany the officers to the nearest police station.

Broome was excited and voluble as he was questioned about his movements on the day of the crime. He denied that he had been in Slough. He declared that he had not even spoken to Mrs. Wilson in his life. Bower listened quietly, now and again interjecting a question. He was not impressed with the story of the young man.

"How," he asked, "did you get that scratch on your face?"

"I was in a fight," answered the other. "There was a dispute about some bets, and we had a scuffle at the corner of the Hampstead and Euston roads."

This was too flimsy for credit. The injury, as Bower had noted at the moment he set eyes on his quarry, ran right across one cheek towards the nose, from which a small piece of skin was missing. It was covered with a thick layer of powder. It was just such a scratch as he had expected to find on the face of the murderer.

"I felt certain," he said later, "that the injury had been caused by the finger-nail, not of a man, but of a woman; in short, and not to beat about the bush, by the nail of the murdered woman while trying to defend herself from her assailant."

To recapitulate the details of the long and circumstantial story told by Broome that summer morning to the police would add nothing to the interest of this story. Sufficient that it was demonstrably false, and that later at the Assizes, when he put forward a more plausible alibi, he declared that he was drunk at the time.

All the same, it is not a capital offence to tell lies

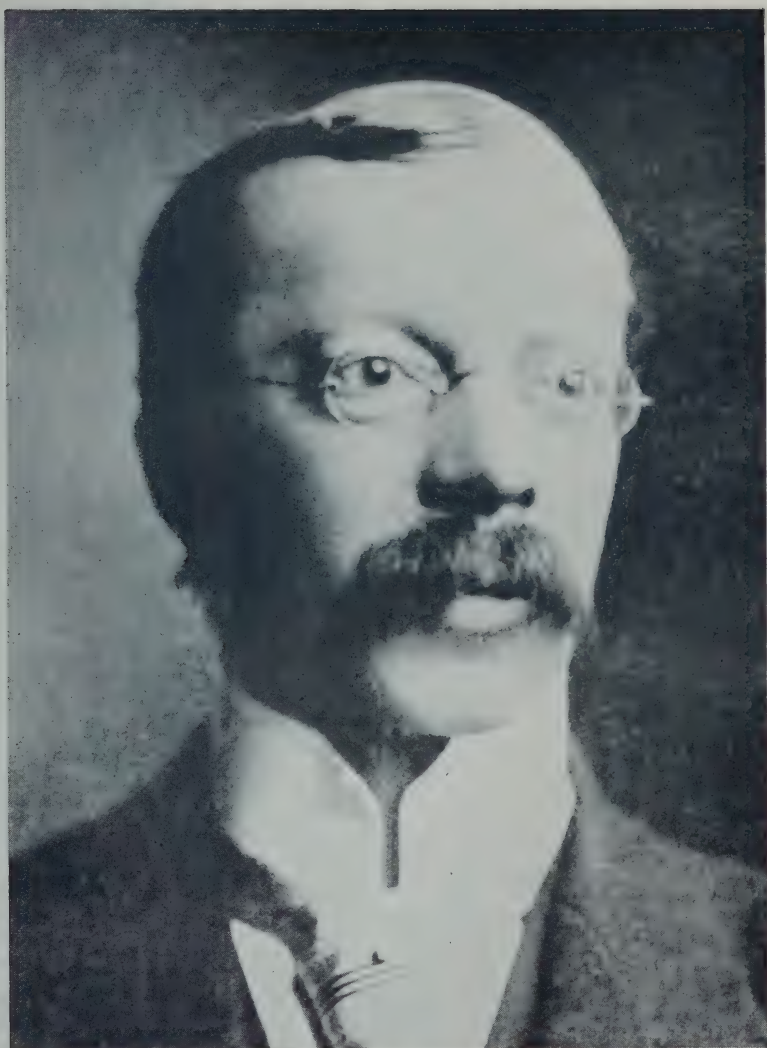
to a detective. Bower was convinced that he had a murderer, but he was still a long way from proving it. He could show that Broome was in Slough on the day that the crime happened. He could show that he had a scratch on his face such as might reasonably be expected to be found on that of the murderer. He could show that Broome knew the habits of the dead woman. That was all.

He had, however, acquired the advantage of another point from which to pursue his inquiries. He could work backwards from Broome as well as forwards from the murdered woman.

The accused man was found to have had lodgings in a street near Regent's Park. Thither Bower went. One of his earliest finds was an envelope which contained twenty pounds in gold—nineteen sovereigns and two half-sovereigns. There were small, queer stains on a pair of boots which belonged to the prisoner. These were carefully handled. Bower had his own surmise about those stains.

Grotesque as was the story that had been told by the accused man, every point had to be followed up. Bit by bit it crumpled to nothing. It might still be that Broome had not committed the murder—but in any event he had not substantiated his assertions that he was not in Slough at the time. Whatever else he was, he was a clumsy liar. No fewer than three chemists were found to whom he had applied for something that would conceal the wound on his cheek. To each he had told a different story of the manner in which it had come to be inflicted on him.

It was at this point that detective work from a



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different angle was commenced. Bower had provided the material, but he did not pretend to any nice scientific attainments. He had done the spade-work. It was for others to carry his conclusions to their farthest extent.

In Germany he would have been part of a "murder commission" or "homicide squad," with its quota of police officers and medical and other specialists. The investigations would have been more self-contained. The only advantage of this over our apparently looser system—and it is a theoretical rather than a practical advantage—is that an expert is at hand to note some point that might otherwise be overlooked. In England men of high scientific attainments hold retainers from the Home Office, and are consulted by the police as occasion may arise. They are not members of any police force.

That was what happened in the case of Broome. Those things which the acumen and quick perception of Bower believed might form links in the chain of evidence were confided to the scrutiny of Dr. (now Sir) William Wilcox, the Consulting Medical Officer to the Home Office, who, from the seclusion of his laboratory, has before and since played no inconsiderable part in sending murderers much more astute and cunning than Broome to the gallows. He it was who, after exhaustive scientific experiments, proved that Crippen had used the rare poison of hyoscine in the murder of Belle Ellmore, and that arsenic had been cunningly administered to the victim of Seddon.

That trivial but damning piece of brown paper so carefully preserved by Bower was closely considered.

It had its tale to tell. Meticulous measurements down to an infinitesimal part of an inch were made of the impressions which had been left upon it. These signs showed that it had contained nineteen coins—the marks made by the two smaller coins were naturally not so clear. Farther than this, Dr. Wilcox was able to show that minute traces of gold were apparent upon the paper. No reasonable person could doubt that it had at one time contained sovereigns.

Then there were the boots. Somehow Broome had got rid of any other bloodstains that might have been on his clothes. But on the instep of the boots were those little blotches to which Bower ascribed a sinister origin. These Wilcox had no trouble in proving to be traces of blood.

The accused man was brought to trial on evidence as utterly circumstantial as has ever been presented in a case of murder. There were the gold coins, the bloodstained boots, the scratch on the face, his presence at Slough on the day of the murder. Now, if Broome had been a more clever, a more ready-witted man he might well have escaped conviction. The jury would conceivably have hesitated had there been any plausible defence.

In fact, like many another man, he talked himself to the scaffold. He realized, too late, that many of the things he had told the detectives could be demonstrated as false. So he concocted a silly story which attempted to dovetail the known circumstances to a perfectly innocent construction. On the day of the crime he had, he said, been to Scotland Yard to try to pass a test as a taxi-driver, but he had been too

late. Then there had been the altercation with the betting man, in which he had received the scratch. He had taken train to Windsor to call at the headquarters of the local Yeomanry, but had found them closed. Thence he had gone to Slough, where he had visited several public-houses. He left at ten at night, visited a billiard-room, went to a chemist's shop to buy a lotion to dress his face, and then home to his rooms. But, although he gave this rigmarole in detail to account for every hour of his time that day, he was unable to produce any witness to show where he was at the vital hours when the murder probably took place. He made a poor figure in cross-examination.

If it was Bower whose resource and observation first fastened suspicion upon him, if it was Wilcox who had riveted the fatal links of scientific evidence, it was Broome himself who completed the chain. No forensic skill could have saved him. So he was found guilty and taken away to suffer his fate.

CHAPTER XI

A DEVIL'S DANCE

WHOLEHEARTED wickedness is a rare thing. You will not find it in one criminal among a million, for invariably there is some redeeming trait in even the worst man's character. Less often still will you find it wedded to those qualities of brain and audacity that make its possessor as devastating a danger to the community as a mad tiger in a city street.

H. H. Holmes came pretty near the specification of the perfect scoundrel. He shot the whole works. In his contempt for law and humanity he was utterly complete. They used to hold in Texas that a horse-thief was capable of any degradation. Holmes was a horse-thief who did much to justify Texan opinion. What might have happened to him in that State, in that stage of his career if he had not escaped to regions where justice was less primitive, is a matter of speculation. Much tragedy would in all likelihood have been averted, and a very able detective would have been saved a great deal of hard work.

Holmes, of course, was not his name. He had, in fact, many names, for he changed them easily and frequently. But his real name was Herman W. Mudgett, although I shall prefer to call him Holmes throughout this chronicle. He was a man of some education, for he had been a student of the University of Vermont, and had obtained a medical degree in

Michigan. A suave, insinuating man was Holmes, with a native ability of no mean degree, and a masterful will that entirely swayed many of those who became his associates.

At the period at which this story opens, Holmes was the proprietor of a singular building in Chicago, which later became known as "Holmes' Castle." It was four stories high, the ground floor being taken up by a drug store, apparently of a perfectly innocent and commonplace character. The second floor was Holmes' own private province. As part of his office there was a vault from which no sound might penetrate. Even the bathroom had its secret, for concealed beneath a rug was a trapdoor opening on a stairway leading to a cellar. From a laboratory on the third floor a similar concealed staircase also led down. In the cellar was a furnace.

This was Holmes' headquarters, but affairs often called him away. His already tortuous life was complicated by the fact that at various stages of his career he had "married" three women, each of whom was in ignorance of the existence of the others. It was necessary to maintain a delicate balance in his matrimonial relations. Perhaps, however, it is an injustice to assume, to a man of his resource, that the dilemma of three wives was more than a triviality. He had other concerns, of which the chief was the swindling of insurance companies.

Holmes, as I have hinted, had been in trouble in Texas. Apart from the little matter of horse stealing, there was a land swindling transaction in which he was concerned with one named Pitezal, a gangling, drink-

sodden crook who was entirely under the domination of the stronger rascal. Thus, by way of prologue to the story, we find Holmes in gaol awaiting trial, and in the same prison a gentleman, by name Marion Hedgspeth, a notorious bandit and train-robber.

Holmes was one of those talkative men who at the same time can be very secretive. But possibly the monotony of gaol life sapped his habitual caution. Anyway, he made Hedgspeth a confidant, and bragged splendidly of his future plans. He showed how ridiculously simple it was to dupe an insurance company by insuring the life of a confederate, who had merely to disappear while a dead body was substituted in his place, care being taken to preserve an air of verisimilitude. He had, he explained, done something on these lines before, and was working out a new plan on a similar basis. The only difficulty was that he needed a reliable lawyer—Holmes' conception of the word "reliable" being perfectly understood by his hearer—who could make the claim. For an introduction to such a man he was willing to pay five hundred dollars when the coup came off.

Hedgspeth was much struck with his new acquaintance—"one of the smoothest and slickest men I ever met"—and gave him an introduction to Mr. Jephtha D. Howe, a St. Louis attorney. Holmes managed to secure a release on bail, and never returned to face his trial. Instead he went to get Pitezal out of a little bother in Indiana, and had a word with Mr. Jephtha D. Howe.

Not long thereafter a B. F. Perry set up as a patent agent in Callowhill Street, Philadelphia. He did little

business, but among those who visited him was Holmes. Holmes explained to that wife who accompanied him that he was trying to sell a patent letter copier to a railway company. In point of fact his business was much more sinister. For Perry was Pitezel, and Pitezel, with his heavy-witted bungling and sottishness, had become a nuisance to the clear-headed and nimble-witted Holmes.

One Sunday evening Holmes and his wife left Philadelphia for Indianapolis, he, as he explained, having carried out his business satisfactorily. No one saw Perry on Monday. On Tuesday his dead body was found at his office. It was lying in a back room, exposed to the fierce glare of the August sun, with the face unrecognizable. It seemed that he had been the victim of an explosion, for beside him was a shattered bottle which had contained benzine, a pipe filled with tobacco, and a burnt match. But it was curious that the broken glass had fallen within the lower part of the bottle, instead of being hurled away from it as would naturally be the case if it had exploded. It was curious, too, that a doctor's examination should disclose chloroform poisoning as the real cause of death. Yet, somehow, these facts were not appreciated at their true significance at the time, and at the inquest a verdict was returned that Perry met his death by the inhalation either of flame or of chloroform.

Then Mr. Jephtha D. Howe got to work. On behalf of Mrs. Pitezel, in whose name the insurance had been taken out, he declared that Perry was her husband, Ben Pitezel, and accordingly claimed ten

thousand dollars, the amount of the insurance policy. It was at this point that Holmes had to proceed warily. Mrs. Pitezel did not realize that the body lying at Philadelphia was that of her husband. She believed that everything was going according to plan—that Ben Pitezel was safely in hiding, and that a body had been substituted. The affair had been talked over on these lines, and she knew that Holmes and Ben had pulled off similar frauds before. It had been with some unwillingness that she had agreed to play a part.

Holmes assured her that her husband was alive and well, and that she and her children would be able to join him after the complete plan had been carried out. Any hesitation, any failure to obey his instructions, he observed, might result seriously for Ben. But at all costs she had to be prevented from seeing the body.

The insurance company was not unnaturally a little suspicious. They required an impartial identification of the dead man. It was found that a Mr. Holmes had had business dealings with Pitezel, and, still unaware that he had any but the most remote interest in the case, the insurance company tried to trace him. They had found that he had a home in a small Illinois town. There, his second wife explained that he was travelling on business in Indiana. She offered to write to him with the company's request. This she did, and the letter reached him while he was with wife number three. He returned to wife number two, and wrote a letter to the insurance company. Yes, he had known the late Mr. Pitezel and his family. Subject to compensation for loss of time and to his expenses being paid—an adroit touch this—he was quite willing to

go to Philadelphia to identify the body. And thus he was brought into the matter in a quite natural and unsuspecting way.

So Holmes went to Philadelphia and was introduced to Mr. Jephtha D. Howe as an entire stranger. He declared the body to be that of his friend. Mr. Howe explained that Mrs. Pitezel was too ill to come herself, but he had brought her fourteen-year-old daughter, Alice. Whether pressure was put upon this child, or whether she genuinely believed that the charred remains were those of her father will never be known. Anyway, the insurance people were satisfied, and ten thousand dollars were paid over to Howe as the representative of Mrs. Pitezel.

Then Holmes and the lawyer with the poor bewildered and conscience-stricken woman met to divide the spoils. There was trouble at this conference, for Howe demanded three thousand for himself. The greater scoundrel was not slow to recognize blackmail when he met it, and for once lost command of himself. But the lawyer had the whip hand, and a violent scene culminated in his obtaining two thousand five hundred dollars. The remainder was handed over to Mrs. Pitezel, but she did not retain it long. They were barely out of the office when Holmes demanded five hundred dollars from her to pay some supposed debt of her husband's.

Then he bamboozled her with a tale of paying off a loan her husband had made from a bank. Thus he got five thousand more. In a very little while, in one way and another, he had stripped her of all but a sum of five hundred dollars.

Let us return for the moment to Hedgspeth, the train-robber, by now sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment. From Howe he learned that the scheme confided to him by Holmes had been carried into effect. But the five hundred dollars he had been promised for the introduction to Jephtha D. Howe had not materialized. This, not unnaturally, left him a little sore, and he took the prison governor into his confidence. There chanced at this time to be in St. Louis, Gary, an inspector in the employ of the insurance company. He learned that Howe had "talked," and going to the prison had an enlightening interview. He followed this up by other inquiries and found that Holmes had vanished. So had Mrs. Pitezel and her children. More than that, the obliging Mr. Holmes and the astute Mr. Howe, who had met as strangers in Philadelphia, were found to have had intimate relations before.

It was at once obvious that an ingenious fraud had been perpetrated. The insurance company engaged Pinkerton detectives to work with its own men in hunting down Holmes. The usual false clues were followed up for some time. Then a hint came that Holmes, calling himself Howell, had passed through Prescott, in Canada, and the detectives became satisfied that they had at last picked up the true scent. Holmes discovered that he was being shadowed, and twisted and wriggled back to the United States with his pursuers at his heels. For the time the detectives were content to keep him under surveillance, for the evidence at their disposal did not as yet warrant an arrest. This went on for nine days,

and then Holmes reached Boston. There it was thought wise to secure him, and as the detectives had heard that there was an old warrant out against him in Texas for horse stealing they wired to the authorities of that State, and Holmes was arrested on the old charge.

Holmes seems to have had some dread of what might happen to him if he was sent back to Texas, and he probably had a notion that his arrest on the horse stealing charge was a pretext. He preferred to take his chance in Philadelphia. Quite light-heartedly he admitted that he had defrauded the insurance company, and willingly invented details to explain how it had been done. In fact he became too talkative, for he explained that a body had been procured in New York, doubled up in a trunk, and sent to Philadelphia. One official happened to remember that the body of "Perry" was straight and rigid when found. He sceptically asked how a body could be stiffened again after *rigor mortis* had been broken.

The prisoner saw the blunder he had made. A little later he told another story. The body was really that of Pitezel who had committed suicide by taking chloroform. Holmes had found the body. Then he had carried out the plan which had already been made to deceive the insurance company, but had used the actual body of Pitezel instead of a substitute.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Pitezel had been decoyed to Boston from a house in Burlington, Vermont, which had been rented for her by Holmes, and placed under arrest. She was in great agony of mind, and tried with pitiful ill-success to deny that she had taken part in

any fraud. But another and greater anxiety oppressed her. She did not know whether her husband was alive or dead, nor did she know what had happened to her three children. There was Alice, who had gone to identify the body in Philadelphia, a boy named Howard, and another girl named Nellie. These had been taken away from her by Holmes to be put in the charge, so he said, of a widow lady in Kentucky till such time as the whole family could be re-united. When these facts became known to the authorities they also became very much interested in the fate of the children.

“It is strongly suspected, Holmes,” the District Attorney told him bluntly, “that you have not only murdered Pitezal, but that you have killed these children. The best way to remove this suspicion is to produce the children at once. Now where are they?”

Holmes was quite ready to explain—explanations were his long suit. The children had gone with his sometime secretary at the Chicago drug store, a Miss Minnie Williams, to England.

In parenthesis it may be said that Miss Williams had, like many other women, become infatuated with Holmes, and had been tricked out of some of her property. From Chicago she had written to her sister Nannie inviting her to come to her wedding.

According to Holmes, Nannie arrived, and there was for some reason a violent quarrel between the two, during which Minnie killed her sister. Holmes arrived a little later, and to conceal all trace of the crime dropped the body into the lake. Of course, after this

distressing event Minnie was only too glad to get out of the country with the Pitezel children. She had gone to London—he gave the name of a street that had no existence—to open a massage establishment. Holmes declared his eagerness to give any aid in finding Minnie Williams and the children, and fiercely resented the attitude expressed by one of his hearers that his story was a wild invention from beginning to end. “Why should I kill innocent children?” he demanded.

The unfortunate Mrs. Pitezel was released from gaol, and Holmes was detained on one pretext and another while the search for some definite evidence that he was a murderer went on.

That the skein was ultimately unravelled was largely due to the dogged patience and resolution of Detective Frank Geyer, who played a conspicuous part in the subsequent investigation.

Holmes had juggled his cards with amazing dexterity. He had resolved that no person who by the faintest chance could betray him should remain alive. They were to be taken to places where they were not known and where none would miss them. The problem as he dealt with it called for consummate audacity, enormous skill, and constant watchfulness. He started to travel the American continent with his third wife, and on his itinerary he carried two other groups. One of these was Mrs. Pitezel, her baby, and her eldest daughter Dessie; the other was the three remaining Pitezel children. Mrs. Holmes knew nothing of the proximity of the Pitezels. Mrs. Pitezel was unaware of the nearness of her three missing

children ; and these latter thought that they were far away from her. Yet again and again they stayed in the same town with Holmes passing between them.

Geyer began his search in Cincinnati. There he found that a Mr. Alexander E. Cook, with three children, had stayed at the Atlantic House Hotel for one day, transferring the following day in the same name to the Bristol Hotel. The detective, with a shrewd appreciation of the mental processes of Holmes, cast about the estate agents of the city and found that on the day Mr. Cook had arrived, a Mr. A. C. Hayes had rented a house. A neighbour had seen Mr. Hayes drive up in a waggon with a boy, and, to her surprise, the only furniture taken into the place was a large stove. Still more to her astonishment on the following day Mr. Hayes told her that after all he did not intend to stay in the house, and made her a present of the stove.

Then the trail led to Indianapolis. There three children had been left at the Hotel English for one night under the name of Canning. The individual who left them was clearly Holmes. The following morning they had been taken away. Here for the time Geyer was baffled. He spent a long time in trying to recover the lost scent, and after much arduous investigation he found that the party had removed to an hotel in the city which had since closed, called the Circle House.

To the proprietor of this place Holmes had described himself as the uncle of the children, and explained that Howard was a bad boy whom he was trying to place in an institution. Here the children

had remained for ten days, homesick and unhappy, seldom going out of the place, and writing letters to their mother—letters which Holmes took care never reached her, as hers never reached them.

Next Holmes was in Detroit. He had written to Mrs. Pitezel that "Ben" was waiting to see her there, and thither she went with Dessie and the baby, staying at an hotel under the name of Adams. There were in the city Mr. and Mrs. Holmes at one hotel, Mrs. Pitezel at another, and the children at a third, barely ten minutes' walk away from their mother.

Holmes met Mrs. Pitezel and explained that "Ben" had been obliged to go away, but that she would certainly meet him soon. The heartsick woman, though fearful of the circumstance of mystery by which she was surrounded, had to be content. Again in Detroit Holmes rented a house. There, in the rear part of a cellar he dug a hole, with what sinister purpose may be conceived.

This devil's dance across a continent went on. With the unerring pertinacity of a bloodhound Geyer moved to Toronto. Holmes had taken his different parties there—all but one person, the boy Howard. He never reached Canada.

It was at Toronto that the merest chance saved all Holmes' complicated plans from being upset. As usual the various parties were staying at different hotels. On one occasion he met Mrs. Pitezel fortuitously in the street. Had they not met, in another few minutes she would have come face to face with her missing children. Holmes led her in another direction.

For eight days Geyer worked untiringly to discover what had happened in Toronto. Steadily he worked through such lists as the house agents could furnish, and when this avenue was exhausted called in the aid of the Press. So a clue at last came to light. A house was found which Holmes had rented in St. Vincent Street. The only furniture he had taken into the place had been a bed and a mattress. The next door neighbour, an old Scotsman, told Geyer how Holmes had borrowed a spade to dig a hole, wherein his widowed sister, for whom he said he had rented the place, could store potatoes. Geyer borrowed that same spade, and there, in the cellar, he found toys that had belonged to the Pitezel children, and after a little the bodies of the children themselves.

This did not finish the quest. The mystery of the fate of the two girls had been solved, but there still remained the mystery of the boy Howard. Back went Geyer to Indianapolis. There he worked on a list of houses that had been advertised to let during Holmes' stay in the vicinity. Nine hundred of these were followed up fruitlessly. The assiduous detective nearly confessed himself baffled. "By Monday," he wrote, in one of his reports, "we will have searched every outlying town except Irvington. After Irvington I scarcely know where we shall go."

Irvington, however, was the end. A house was found there which Holmes had taken, and there, buried beneath a piazza, were discovered the remains of a trunk that had belonged to the Pitezel children. Holmes had erected a stove at this house, and here were grim proofs of the purpose to which it had been

put. Some burnt human remains were found in the cellar chimney, and medical examination left no doubt of little Howard's fate. Geyer returned to Philadelphia.

Other detectives had traced out Holmes' movements after he had killed the children in Toronto. He had taken his wife, and Mrs. Pitezel, and her two remaining children first to Ontario, and thence to Ogdenburg, New York. From there they journeyed to Burlington, in Vermont, where the master villain again took a house and began to dig a hole in the cellar. By this time he had probably become aware that he was being followed, and, leaving Mrs. Pitezel, he sent his third wife, who had been travelling with him all this time, on to Boston. He himself went to pay a visit to his parents, and also to his first wife, inventing an ingenious and plausible story to account for his long absence and silence. Then he went off again to join his third wife in Boston. There he was arrested.

It was in his prison at Philadelphia that Holmes learned of Geyer's discoveries at Toronto. He was unshaken. "For the moment," he wrote, "it seemed so impossible that I was inclined to think it was one of the frequent newspaper excitements that had attended the earlier part of the case, but . . . I became convinced that at least certain bodies had been found there, and upon comparing the date when the house was hired I knew it to be the same as when the children were in Toronto; and thus being forced to realize the awfulness of what had probably happened, I gave up trying to read the article and saw

instead the two little faces as they had looked when I had hurriedly left them—felt the innocent child's kiss so timidly given, and heard again their earnest words of farewell, and realized that I had received another burden to carry to my grave with me equal to, if not worse, than the horrors of Nannie Williams' death."

It is to be doubted if this impressed the prosecutor. Nor did Holmes' fantastic riot of imagination help him. There was, according to him, a certain Edward Hatch—no trace of his existence could, by the way, be discovered—who he believed at first had assisted Minnie Williams in taking the children to England. He could now only suggest that the girl, "in a hellish wish for vengeance," had urged the mythical Hatch to the crime, knowing that Holmes would be suspected.

This ingenious solution was also received frigidly. "Holmes' Castle," in Chicago, had been the subject of investigation by competent investigators, and many significant things had been found there, which made certain that he had engaged in a wholesale system of murder.

Since a man can only be hanged once his trial was confined to the charge of murdering Pitezel. The case for the defence was most bitterly and ably fought, although Holmes, with that vanity which besets so many criminals, quarrelled with his counsel and at first attempted to fight his own case. He cross-examined with marked skill, and let loose, as he described it, "a fount of emotion," but he was quick to realize his ignorance of legal technicalities, and

called his lawyers again to his aid. One, at least, of these does not appear to have been too scrupulous, for, after a conviction had been obtained, application was made for a new trial, partly on the ground that fresh evidence had been discovered.

In point of fact this fresh evidence had been invented by the lawyer, who turned about for someone willing to swear to it. Somehow or other this came to the ears of the ever alert Geyer who, unwilling to disappoint, arranged that a police matron should pose under an assumed name as willing to swear to anything for a consideration of twenty dollars. The trap acted, and the lawyer was eventually indicted for subornation of perjury.

Meanwhile all attempts to obtain a new trial failed, and Holmes realized that his fate was sealed. But he retained his insolent nonchalance, and even sold to the newspapers a confession in which he declared that he had committed twenty-seven murders, some by poison, others by more melodramatic methods. Even then, with death imminent, he could not resist bragging that he had cheated the purchasers and that the confession was bogus. Actually it is fairly certain that he killed at least ten people. He was executed on May 7, 1896.

CHAPTER XII

THE COINER'S DOG

EXCEPT the receiver, there is probably no professional criminal more difficult to convict than the maker of counterfeit money. For such a man usually keeps carefully under cover, never passing any of the "snide" himself, and, even though some of his agents may be run to earth, the bigger rogue may smile at the efforts of the detective while he remains inaccessible to justice.

There is in the Black Museum at Scotland Yard to-day, a collection of coiner's implements which found their way there through a black retriever dog. The utility of dogs in the ordinary course of police work is a matter of discussion in which I propose to take no part here. I do not know what the views of Chief Detective-Inspector Fox were. But I have no doubt he would have held that dogs could be of great service to the Criminal Investigation Department—on occasion. There was a gentleman, named Woodstock, who comes into this story, and whose views on dogs would have been interesting. However, he might be prejudiced. The fidelity of a dog to its master is a noble trait, and yet there have been times when less devotion—but I get ahead of my story.

I do not know if Fox is still alive, but he is still remembered at Scotland Yard for many very good reasons. He was in charge of the investigations into

the first London murder where fingerprints played an important part ; he invented a small " flying section " of four men, to perform, necessarily on a less elaborate scale, the duties carried out by the " Flying Squad " of to-day. He was a singularly capable and resourceful officer, and he had won something of a reputation for his activities against coiners. Many a skilful rogue had passed through his hands, but the biggest of all had always eluded him. Indeed, for something like a quarter of a century Woodstock had made no mistake that mattered. He was as subtle in his precautions as he was skilful in his craftsmanship.

Those were the days when gold was a commonplace in Great Britain, and notes for anything under five pounds unknown. Whether in gold or silver, however, the counterfeits manufactured by Woodstock so closely resembled the real thing that there were times when even the experts were guessing.

Woodstock had his business pretty thoroughly organized. Those of his associates who came in personal association with him were men and women whom he had known for years and whom he felt that he could thoroughly trust. Even so he must have handled these people with tact, for it is from such sort that betrayal usually comes. Also, beyond all question, it was a profitable thing to keep in with Woodstock.

These men and women were, so to speak, the wholesale channels for his wares. It is improbable that any of them ever tried to utter the bogus money. They sold it wholesale to their own clients, at rates varying from five shillings for a single sovereign, to seven or eight shillings for a " load " of twenty half-

crowns. Few of the purchasers had heard of Woodstock, and it is almost certain that none of them knew him.

One may be sure that Fox raked all the avenues of the underworld that were open to him for information about the coiner. The result was meagre and discouraging enough. There was Woodstock's name. There was no photograph and no description on which reliance could be placed. There was a vague statement that Woodstock had been seen in Peckham, and that he owned a black retriever dog, named Nero.

Slight enough things these. But Fox had orders to make coining unprofitable in London, and he had to make shift. He flung a dozen detectives from Scotland Yard into Peckham, where they were less likely to be known than the local men, and began one of the most singular searches that have ever fallen to the lot of the Criminal Investigation Department.

Every black retriever dog seen in the neighbourhood of Peckham was shadowed to its home. Possibly there were those who saw something ludicrous and futile in the proceedings, but Fox held dourly on. Scores of dogs were examined without result, and it began to look as if all the enormous labour involved was to bring no reward. Then one day Fox himself observed a black retriever ambling along one of the Peckham main streets. With a habit that had become almost second nature he slapped his leg ingratiatingly and called, "Nero!"

To his surprise—for he had become used to repulse—the dog responded. And while the detective patted the animal he meditated upon the next step. How

was he to persuade Nero to show him the way to his home?

With an appreciation of canine nature as wide as his understanding of human nature, Fox turned to a near-at-hand butcher's shop. There he bought sufficient to feed the animal to repletion. When the dog could eat no more, he tempted it with a luscious and juicy steak. Nero, gorged though he was, thought of that day when he might fail to find a burly benefactor in so generous a mood. So, as Fox expected, he started for home, carrying his treasure with him to bury against the day of need. The detective, hailing an opportune cab, followed.

The chase was carried a matter of some miles to a big stone-fronted villa at New Cross. The dog rushed through a gate, and a girl who stood there attempted to pat it. Fox hurriedly ordered the cabman to drive on. At the sight of the girl a great light had broken on him—an explanation of at least one of the reasons why it had been so difficult for any C.I.D. man to get within reach of Woodstock.

The girl, recognized by Fox, was one of the waitresses at the refreshment-room of one of the great criminal courts of London. Every detective was drawn to that court many times a year, and an observant girl would have little difficulty in remembering practically every man in the Criminal Investigation Department. It was easy now to appreciate how simple it had been. She, no doubt, had been able to point out, or to describe to Woodstock, those men he must particularly avoid. And thus he had been able to take measures to keep himself closely under cover when-

ever a Scotland Yard man got too closely upon his trail.

A very few inquiries satisfied Fox that he had hit upon Woodstock's home. That, however, was only a first step. It was highly improbable that so wary a man would have his workshop at his home. And until the workshop was discovered it was hopeless to expect evidence. Nothing was to be gained by any hurried step, which might defeat its own purpose.

The house was put under surveillance—you may be sure that the detectives engaged upon this task kept well out of sight of the lady who, at session time, might have served them with sandwiches and beer—and keen and observant eyes took in every detail of Woodstock's appearance. That in itself was so much gained. Whatever happened, the master-coiner was "docketed." Never again would he be able to remain unknown to the Scotland Yard men.

Day after day Woodstock was shadowed in the hope that sooner or later he would disclose his workshop. But when this failed at the outset, so experienced an officer as Fox must have known that it would be useless to expect to attain his ends in that way. Whatever the story-books say, a man cannot be shadowed indefinitely without discovering the fact. Woodstock, having divined that he was watched, immediately became the most innocent person in the world. There was no movement, no action of his to which exception could be taken. He was elaborately inoffensive. Clearly he did not intend to run his head into a noose to oblige the men who had so mysteriously fathomed his identity.

This stalemate hit one section of the coining industry hard. The "smashers"—the passers of illicit coin—were out of work. This was satisfactory from one point of view, for it indicated that Woodstock was the last coiner on a big scale left in London at that time. While he was idle business was paralyzed.

All the fertile schemes of the detectives to induce Woodstock to betray himself naturally resulted in nothing, since that gentleman was almost offensive in the purity of his life. Much, however, was learned of his ordinary habits. He was of a quietly convivial disposition, and spent much of his time in the smoke-room of a hostelry much frequented by prosperous tradesmen of the neighbourhood. Fox felt that there should be some means of turning this social habit to account, but it was some days before he struck a solution.

Then he had a quiet interview with one of the tradesmen with whom Woodstock was most intimate. Swearing this gentleman to secrecy, he told him something of his suspicions in regard to the coiner, and enlisted him as an ally. So it came about that Woodstock and his household were invited to join a party in a jolly day down at Brighton. He jumped at the idea. As the vigilance of the detectives precluded him from working, he was, no doubt, glad of a little relief to the monotony of an idle existence.

Anyway, he went, and with his departure Fox became busy. There are ways and means familiar to officers of the Criminal Investigation Department by which locks and bolts may be circumvented. It is quite possible that Woodstock foresaw the possibility

that a search of his house would take place during his absence. If so, he worried little. There was nothing in the place that could be used against him in any incriminating manner. In fact, Fox had appreciated this probability. He had the place searched with rigour as a matter of form. But his real object was to regain his acquaintance with his old friend, Nero. Nero had been of use once. Why not again?

The dog was found lying peacefully asleep on a mat. His first touch of irascibility vanished as he recognized the kind gentleman who had fed him at Peckham, and he was put on a lead. Then the detectives took him some distance away from the house to the district in which it was suspected that Woodstock's private mint was located, and there turned him loose.

The experiment was one which might fail utterly. No one knew that better than Fox, who was at hand with a cab ready to follow the dog to wherever it might lead. Another detective, named Bex, had brought a bicycle, so that if by chance the hunt should lead in places where the more unwieldy vehicle could not follow there would always be someone on the heels of the animal.

They watched Nero with some anxiety. If Fox's reasoning was correct, the animal must, on occasion, have accompanied the coiner to his working quarters. He was gambling on the probability that if the lair really was in the neighbourhood the instinct of the dog would disclose it.

It was a shot in the dark, but it hit the mark. Nero was in no great hurry. He revelled in his freedom

for a while and seemed to have no fixed purpose in his mind. Suddenly he set off at a lope. The cyclist followed, and behind him the cab.

For a quarter of an hour the detectives were busy on their strange chase. It ended on the steps of a house in a street known as The Triangle. There the dog came to a halt and whined at the door.

The detectives also came to a halt and thrust a casual question at the residents next door. "Did they know the dog?"

The woman who took upon herself to answer nodded energetically. "Yes, I know him. His name is Nero. He belongs to the gentleman next door."

"I see," said Fox thoughtfully. And then, as if by an afterthought as he was turning away: "Do you know where the gentleman is? We're interested in that dog."

But the woman knew little about her neighbour except that he was an engraver and only worked on two or three days a week. That, however, was enough for Fox. He was sure now that he had come at last to Woodstock's workshop, and, although legally he had not the shadow of a right without a search-warrant, he resolved to have a glance at it. This was one of those occasions which sometimes do happen in real detective work when it was necessary to forget the strict letter of the law.

A few minutes' work on the lock and the front door yielded, a bell at the same time ringing an alarm in an inner room. This did not disconcert the officers, who knew that Woodstock was away, and they pushed their way within. In a few moments they were

examining the most complete and perfect coiner's kit that, up to that time, they had ever seen. There was nothing elaborate about it—apparatus of this kind does not require to be elaborate—but there was nothing lacking. Everything was designed for its purpose. The moulds, the batteries, the electrical equipment were of the very best. There was evidence, too, of his skill in the piles of coins, all of first-rate workmanship, that were found.

The location of the workshop had been fixed with some cunning. There were entrances back and front, and from the windows the coiner could watch unseen the arrival and departure of every visitor to the Triangle.

Fox and his men carefully replaced everything and left the house. The dog, once more on a lead, was taken back to Woodstock's home and left, as he had been found, on the mat. The coiner and his household returned from their jaunt that evening, and if they noticed any indications of disturbance they gave no sign.

Meanwhile Fox drew off those men who had been shadowing Woodstock. There was no longer reason for that kind of vigilance. In fact, there were reasons against it, for the man had to be lulled into the belief that Scotland Yard had given up its operations against him. While he was under surveillance he was scarcely likely to walk into the trap that the detective-inspector had carefully baited at the Triangle.

In a day or two Woodstock had come to the conclusion that the coast was clear. It is possible that those of his agents who were paid by results were

getting clamorous. He decided that it was time to get back to work.

One evening he stole to the Triangle, but his key had barely turned in the door of his workshop before two or three burly detectives had thrown themselves upon him. Taken unawares he was quickly overpowered. His long run was over.

As is the way of the Criminal Investigation Department, the bulk of this story was condensed into three words at the Old Bailey: "From information received——" And Woodstock was sent into penal servitude for fourteen years.

Ever since our present police has existed—and indeed before—coining operations have challenged the detective instincts of Scotland Yard. The following incident is said by James Grant to have happened in 1837—before any detective force in the proper sense of the term had been created in the police force.

"Information," says Grant, "had been communicated to the police magistrates in London, that the town and neighbourhood of Salisbury had been inundated with counterfeit silver of every denomination, from crown pieces down to sixpences; but that all the efforts of the magisterial authorities in that place had failed to find a clue to the offenders. One of the cleverest of the London inspectors was consulted on the subject, and he at once undertook to discover and bring the parties to justice. Having, from the success of former exploits in the same way, every confidence in the ingenuity and ability of the

inspector, the magistrates signified their willingness to leave the matter wholly in the officer's hands.

“The plan which the latter adopted in the execution of his enterprise was one which would not have suggested itself to ordinary minds. He desired a person in whom he could confide to go down immediately to Salisbury, and, in the disguise and character of a pedlar, to visit all the lower-class public-houses in the town and neighbourhood. He further instructed him, in the event of seeing in those houses suspicious characters, to treat them with gin, or ale, or whatever else in the way of drink they preferred, and to make himself as familiar as possible with them.

“He was to cultivate their acquaintance with the greatest assiduity ; to give them hints that he himself was prepared for any desperate enterprise in the way of robbery or otherwise, provided he got any other parties to assist him ; and in short to have recourse to every possible expedient to get them to make such disclosures to him as would not only satisfy himself, or might satisfy any other reasonable mind that they were the guilty parties, but as would constitute or lead to such evidence as the law would admit.

“The pioneer of the police officer had only been two days in Salisbury when he came in contact with two or three persons whom he at once suspected to belong to the gang of coiners of false money. At first they fought shy of him ; they appeared decidedly averse to his acquaintanceship, but in the course of two or three days more their prepossessions against

him wore off and they entered into familiar conversation with him. The result was the confirmation of his suspicions of what they were.

“The next point to which he directed his attention was the ascertaining what their number was ; for he knew that in such cases they took care not to assemble together in any particular place in public, as that might lead to suspicion. This secret he also soon wormed out of his newly-formed acquaintances. Having succeeded so far he wrote, agreeably to instructions, to the officer in London by whom he was employed.

“His employer immediately proceeded to Salisbury ; but ‘lay by,’ as the phrase is, for ten or twelve days, until his beard should grow to such a length as, with other ingenious expedients, should enable him to disguise himself sufficiently for the execution of his plans. He at once conjectured—and in the conjecture he was right—that the gang of coiners were from London, and that if not disguised he would be recognized before he should be able to carry his schemes into effect.

“His beard having grown to a great length, and having for some days omitted to wash his face or hands, and having also put on a ragged suit of clothes, he ventured into the public-houses which they frequented, and got acquainted with them through the ‘workman’ he had sent to prepare the way before him ; and in a few days was, with one and all of them, a regular ‘Hail-fellow, well met !’

“He soon ascertained that they were all to meet at a particular house, in a low, secluded part of the town,

on a particular night ; and, to make assurance doubly sure that this meeting was to take place for the purpose of a new coinage, he proposed treating them on the night and hour they had fixed for their meeting in a public-house which he mentioned. They one and all said the business on which they were to meet that night was so urgent that it must be attended to ; but they should be most happy to have their glass with him on any other evening he might appoint.

“ Thus assured, beyond all doubt, that ‘ an affair ’ was to come off on the evening in question, he got assistance from the magistrates of the place and proceeded to the house in which they were met. His anticipations were all realized : there was the whole gang of them—nine or ten in number—busily employed in the act of coining various descriptions of money. Every one of them was taken into custody, and all of them were convicted at the next assizes and visited with due punishment.”

CHAPTER XIII

A PIECE OF CANDLE

ALTHOUGH this is an era when the full resources of science have been bent to the confusion of the criminals, there are few occasions when the scientific detective has opportunity to let himself go after the manner of Sherlock Holmes. His activities are usually restricted to some specific point—the age of a blood-stain, the composition of an ink, the origin of a particle of dust. Men have been brought to justice in this way ; but most of these feats, wonderful though they may be, have the drawback, from the narrative point of view, that they can be told in a paragraph—almost in a sentence.

The case of Marie Pallot is different, for it presents a story, full of the approved modern elements, which might have been related by Watson himself. She was a mysterious person, this Marie. On and about the waterside at Havre the gossips in the wine-shops told curious stories, and exchanged meaning shrugs when her name was mentioned. It must be said that this woman had her own reasons for holding herself aloof. There were many people who were interested in her mode of living, not least among them the police and the customs authorities.

The very steps that she took to elude curiosity aided to feed it. She lived in a little two-storied house in the Passage des Mathurins, and her attitude discouraged

questions on her manner of life as the singular number of locks and bolts on the doors and windows of her house discouraged visitors. One or two things, however, were known about her. There was reason to suppose that she had come from Marseilles some years before, and though she had passed thirty she was still an attractive woman. There were queer and unaccountable absences from her house during daylight hours, and at these times a taciturn and vigilant old ex-soldier named Pierre Vidal held guard.

In a seaport town gossip had no difficulty in putting a construction on her secretive habits. A discreet person might drive a lucrative trade with the seamen whose vessels were constantly in and out of the port. Tobacco, brandy, drugs—there were scores of commodities which had not paid duty, and for which a ready market might be found. About the quarter where Marie lived you would have found few to doubt that in her barred and bolted house Marie had concealed a well-filled stocking, or its equivalent.

Something of this reached the ears of the police, and, though they cared nothing for the stories of hoarded wealth, they had good reason to suppose that Marie carried on a considerable trade in which they were interested. But the woman was wary. More than once a posse of police made a surprise raid on her premises without finding anything of which she could not give a good account. The police, however, added to their experience a pretty knowledge of picturesque invective.

At some hour after midnight in October, 1909, a yawning gendarme was passing on patrol through the

Passage des Mathurins. He mechanically thrust out a hand to try Marie Pallot's front door and instantly became wide awake. The door was open—a circumstance so unusual as to seize him with something more than vague suspicion. He moved within the darkened passage and raised his voice in quick, imperative summons. No reply came. Pushing his way forward to the end of the passage, he entered a room, and there, by the light of his lantern, beheld Marie Pallot seated at a table. Her arms were spread wide, with her head resting upon them. She appeared as though asleep. Beside her was a glass and a nearly empty bottle. An obvious explanation leapt to the officer's mind, and he approached to arouse her. But the woman gave limply to his touch, and then he saw that it was a more sinister affair than a drunken stupor. She had been killed by some tremendous blow on the back of the head, which it was almost certain had taken her unawares. She could scarcely have been dead long, for the body was still warm. The gendarme hurried away to spread the alarm.

The full detective resources of the town were at once flung on to the case. In a very short time, the police realized that they were pitted against a mystery which would tax their wits to the uttermost. The murderer had opened and ransacked a cupboard in the room where the body was found, which suggested that the motive of the crime was robbery, but no person had been seen to enter or leave the place, and there was no person to whom a thread of definite suspicion could be attached. In fact, there were so many people who might have been tempted to robbery

and murder by the stories of Marie's hidden wealth that at first glance the case seemed insoluble. Such fingerprints as there were were too blurred to be of moment.

Now it chanced that there was at that time in Havre a man who had nothing to do with the official police of the town—he was not even a Frenchman—who was the author of several scientific books on criminology, and who for many years had lectured at Lausanne University on the subject. This was Professor Reiss.

The police of Havre were quite ready to engage the interest and assistance of this gentleman in the investigation of the crime. No doubt they felt themselves fortunate in that an opportunity had providentially presented itself by which they might watch his methods.

There are two ways by which a crime of this nature may be investigated. Experienced police officers fall back on their wide organization, and they seek a key in two things—motive and opportunity. Then, having found a person who has had both motive and opportunity, they work backwards to the crime, filling in the gaps. It is not to be supposed that they despise small clues—and apparent trivialities are frequently used very effectively—but they find that they attain their end more often by the adoption of this method. This would have meant, in such a case as that of Marie Pallot, a progressively increasing snowball inquiry by a number of men among those who were known to have had association with the dead woman until suspicion fastened on some particular person.

In the other way the case is followed directly from

the crime to the criminal by a series of minute observations and shrewd deductions. It is a more subtle process, but in real life it is not always possible to apply it with success, for there is a danger of drawing conclusions from fallacious data. Only an exceptional man, in exceptional circumstances, can use it as triumphantly as did Professor Reiss in elucidating the mystery of Marie Pallot's death.

With the prefect of police he made his way to Marie Pallot's house. There he made a rapid general survey of the situation, and was put in the possession of such facts as the police had gleaned. Then, systematically and carefully, he began a close scrutiny of the street door with a strong magnifying glass. The prefect waited. He pointed out that the door had been forced, and that search had already been made for fingerprints without result.

"No. There are no fingerprints," agreed Reiss. "But these marks made in forcing the door are interesting. See. Here is a bloodstained splinter of wood. The murderer was scratched or cut in his haste. His hand probably slipped."

He abandoned the door and turned his attention to the passage. On his hands and knees he examined the floor inch by inch. Presently an exclamation of satisfaction came from him. "I can tell you one thing," he asserted, raising himself to dust his hands with his handkerchief. "The murderer was a left-handed man. More than that he has a cut on the left hand."

The prefect of police, who seems to have played the part of a slightly more sophisticated Watson during

the Professor's investigations, shook his head. "I don't quite follow you," he admitted.

"Look." The other pointed to the floor. "There are three or four spots of blood on the left of the passage. The splinter on the door shows that the marauder was hurt. This proves that the injury was to his left hand. Now, observe that on the right of the passage there are a number of grease spots, obviously made by a guttering candle. Suppose a desperate man, bent upon stealthy robbery, entering such a place as this. It was dark. He would need a light. He would have a weapon ready in case of interruption. A normal person would carry the light in his left hand and the weapon in his right. Here you have the exact opposite shown by the bloodstains and the grease marks. The position of the wound on the dead woman confirms my opinion."

They re-entered the sitting-room, where everything had been left as on the first discovery of the crime. The body of the woman was still lying as at the moment of death. The Professor delicately examined the glass and bottle still on the table, and sniffed at them. He already knew that Marie Pallot had a taste for strong liquors, although she was far from being an habitual drunkard. It needed no great detective faculty to assume that the woman had been in a drunken sleep when the murderer entered. Reiss remarked that it was possible that some incautious movement of the robber might have aroused her, and that she had been attacked from behind as she stirred. He was in agreement with a theory already formed by the police, that the assailant was a man who knew some-

thing of Marie Pallot and her habits. Otherwise, it was unlikely that he would have gone to a particular cupboard and confined his attention to that only without ransacking the rest of the house.

With the same methodical scrutiny that he had devoted to the door and the passage the scientist now began an elaborate examination of the room. On the carpet in front of the cupboard he found traces of candle-grease. This was sufficient to show him two things. The room had been in darkness when the assassin entered, otherwise he would not have bothered to retain his light. Secondly, the robbery had taken place after the murder. The grease spots were this time on the left, showing that the assassin had finished with his weapon and was holding the candle in his left hand.

Two small hairs picked up from the carpet also rewarded the search of the Professor. The most cursory comparison showed that they did not belong to Marie.

The significance of hairs found upon the scene of a crime has long been recognized as of high importance in criminal investigation. By the aid of the microscope it is possible that they may tell a damning tale.

Reiss was not inclined to minimise the importance of his find. He took the hairs away to study them under a microscope. For a similar purpose he collected some scrapings of the candle-grease. An hour or two later he was again with the prefect of police.

"The man we have to find," he said, "is a left-handed sailor who was recently in Sicily. He has a cut on his left hand, and has a red moustache."

The microscope had filled in for him many of the points of the description. The hairs he had distinguished by certain characteristics as from a man's upper lip. Their presence he accounted for by a nervous tension on the part of the murderer which had caused him, after the killing of the woman, almost unconsciously to pluck at his moustache, as is the habits of some men at moments of strain. The assumption that the man was a sailor was more in the nature of a guess, but it was substantiated by an examination of the grease Reiss had collected.

He disclosed a fact which the prefect of police frankly owned had not been within his knowledge. Many substances are used in the manufacture of candles. Their composition differs according to the purpose for which they are intended, and the components vary in proportion with different manufacturers. He had arranged an analysis of the grease. The candle was thus shown to have a stearine basis mixed in a singular manner with other substances. Such a candle was not made anywhere in France. The Professor had, therefore, wired a description to the scientific section of the Sûreté in Paris to know if they could help to throw any light on its origin. He had received a reply that candles of this peculiar character were only made in Sicily.

A candle does not form part of the personal equipment of a man for any length of time. Therefore it was a fair deduction that the owner of this one had recently been in Sicily. What more probable, having regard to the other circumstances, than that he was a sailor.

The police began immediately to act upon the deductions of Reiss. It was found that a ship—the *Donna Maria*—had arrived at Havre from Sicily two days before. Detectives were sent on board to make inquiries and to look over the crew. Their task was fairly easy. Red-headed men from Southern latitudes are scant. They closed swiftly about a small, but powerfully built, man, with red hair and moustache, who was busy on the steamer's deck. Almost before he was aware of their purpose they had seized him and handcuffs were on his wrists. He struggled in vain. The French police always send adequate force to effect an arrest.

"Why are you doing this?" he cried resentfully. "I demand to know."

"All in good time," said one of the detectives unemotionally. "What is your name?"

"Forfarazzo. I am no criminal. I am an honest sailor. Where are you taking me?"

They made no reply. He was hustled off the boat and, still passionately protesting, brought to the Passage des Mathurins, where, with the dramatic habit of the French in these matters, the stage had been set. Everything—even to the body of Marie Pallot—was as far as possible in the exact position that it had been at the time of the crime.

Reiss and the chief of police were there. The Professor's measured glance met the flashing eyes of the prisoner who, wildly, vehemently, in broken French, again demanded the reason for his arrest.

"Take those handcuffs off," ordered the Professor. "Now, my man, they tell me that your name is For-

farazzo. Of what nationality are you, and what is your profession?"

"I am a native of Sicily," answered the other sulkily. "I am a seaman on the boat *Donna Maria*, and I have done nothing wrong."

"Take a look at that?" said Reiss, extending a sheet of paper. The other put out his left hand, and a quick, significant glance passed between the Professor and the prefect of police.

"This is a blank sheet," said the prisoner in bewilderment.

"Quite so," agreed Reiss. "I see you are left-handed. Do you know this woman?"

He indicated the still figure at the table. Forfarazzo suppressed a shudder and followed the gesture with his eyes. He shook his head. "I have never seen her before. She is a stranger to me."

"Think," said his questioner gravely. "Her name is Marie Pallot. Did you know her?"

"I have told you I did not," persisted the prisoner.

"Show me your left hand," ordered Reiss suddenly. The other hesitated, but an officer moved forward to enforce the order, and unwillingly enough, he put out his hand. A fresh cut ran across the palm.

"How did that happen?" he was asked.

"It was an accident on board the *Donna Maria*. I was shaping a piece of wood and the knife slipped."

"So? It was not, then, while you were trying to force a door?"

The other stared as though puzzled at the question, but there was a flicker in his dark eyes which did not

escape the observers. "No," he declared. "Again I ask of what do you accuse me?"

"Of the murder and robbery of Marie Pallot," broke in the chief of police. "Further denials are useless. Why not confess?"

"Prove it," challenged Forfarazzo defiantly.

There can be little doubt that he believed he had covered the traces of his crime so cleverly that no proof was possible. It was true, perhaps, that this grave Professor person had by some means come to suspect him. But suspicion was a very different thing from proof. There could be no witness against him. He had made sure of that. At the back of his mind he probably believed that the whole thing was a bluff—an attempt to extract a confession, or at least an admission from him. He felt himself safe while he refused to speak.

Reiss diagnosed what was passing in the prisoner's mind. He had convinced himself that the man was a murderer and yet, with all his deductions, astute and clever though they had been, there was still a link missing. He could show the murder had been the work of a man answering in all details to Forfarazzo, but he could not prove in any direct fashion that Forfarazzo was the man.

"If it has not already been done," he told the prefect of police, "it would be well to have this man searched."

Forfarazzo had no objections to a search. If they expected to find any of the proceeds of the robbery on him they would be mistaken. He was not so foolish as that. He obligingly submitted himself as two police

officers turned out his pockets. There were the usual number of trifles such a man was likely to carry about with him, and these were spread out on the table. The stump of a candle came from his jacket pocket.

Reiss picked it up and idly inspected it. He nodded. "This is enough," he said. "It was with such a candle as this that the murderer had light for his crime."

The chain was complete. It led at last direct from crime to criminal.

Then it was that Forfarazzo realized that all his precautions had been in vain. He snarled, and as the police closed about him fought with savage and desperate ferocity. But they were too many for him. He was overborne and carried away.

From then till after his trial he doggedly maintained his innocence. But against the deadly logic of the net of circumstantial evidence which Professor Reiss had woven about him there was no escape. He was found guilty and sentenced to death by the guillotine. It was only when he realized that all hope for him had vanished that he made a long confession, which had interest in showing that practically every inference drawn by Reiss had been correct.

During those voyages when his ship had touched at Havre he had become acquainted with Marie Pallot. She had purchased smuggled brandy from him, and once or twice he had stayed at her house, and so had become acquainted with her habits. "It came to me," he said, "that she must have money secreted about the house. I set myself to find out where. One night I plied her with drink, and she be-

came incautious and took money from a cupboard. Having penetrated her secret I resolved to make an opportunity.

“On this last trip I brought her some brandy. I was confident that she would indulge in some of it. So at night I forced my way into the house. I carried a slung shot in case I was disturbed, but I did not intend to use it except in an emergency. I hurt my hand on the outer door but I did not notice it much at the time. She had not lit her lamp, and was asleep with her head upon the table when I stole into the room. I reached the cupboard without disturbing her, and was kneeling to examine it when I heard a movement. I leapt to my feet and hit her with the shot. Then I went on with the robbery, and managed to get out without attracting any attention.”

There came a grey morning when Forfarazzo paid the final penalty. On that day a grave Professor was lecturing to a group of students at Lausanne University.

CHAPTER XIV

“VILE MELVILLE”

I LAST met William Melville a year or so before the war at his neat, little suburban house in Orlando Road, Clapham. He protested then that he had finished with Scotland Yard, and I knew, although he was telling the strict truth, that he was drawing a retainer from the Home Office, and that there were many difficult and delicate missions on which he was still to be engaged.

This was the man who had won his spurs in detective work of an exceptional nature. The Special Branch of the Criminal Investigation Department very rarely comes into the limelight. It deals with things that are not often the subject of a charge in court. Spies, political offenders, anarchists, and suchlike are its preoccupation. Its men have to act with the most supreme caution, and yet on occasion to take the most desperate risks.

Melville spent a lifetime in this department, and for many years was at its head. The full story of many resourceful and audacious things that were done by this gentle-voiced and quiet-mannered man can never be told. He was to an extent a confidant of kings and princes. Again and again he was engaged on high affairs of State, and there was none who could better keep his own counsel. While he lived he was probably the best hated and most feared enemy of

militant anarchists in the world, and it was his energy and astuteness in fighting them that earned him the epithet among the brotherhood of “Vile Melville.”

He was smilingly contemptuous of those with whom he waged war. They threatened—well, he could take care of himself. He knew very well that some fanatical half-wit, armed with knife or revolver, might some time catch him unawares. That was an inevitable risk, and I do not think that it weighed on his mind for an instant. He had his own ways. One gentleman, who ventured a swift assault from behind in a Soho Street, dragged a limp and battered body back to his colleagues. Another ventured to beard the detective in his lair at Scotland Yard on some pretext. Before he had a chance to fulfil his real purpose the quick eye of the detective had observed a bulge in his pocket, which he diagnosed as a Smith and Wesson. With his two hands, Melville administered justice. He could not waste time in prosecuting such small fry.

In those days Great Britain was wide open to any scallawag who called himself a political refugee, and as a consequence London was a centre of “clubs,” to which doubtful characters of all nationalities resorted. Melville, as inspector, and later as superintendent, of the Special Branch, harried these clubs with all the resources at his command. A special study was made of them, and nothing that happened within their walls was permitted to pass unreported. Precautions were taken to watch dangerous men and women who resorted to them, and many a plot was frustrated ere it was fairly concocted.

It happened one day that nearly half a ton of dynamite was stolen from a quarry in France. Hard upon this there came a series of dynamite outrages. The French police tracked down and prosecuted one of the leading spirits, a man named Ravachol, and notified Melville that two other tigerish characters, named François and Meunier, had taken refuge in England. Both these men were murderers who had given proof that they would stand at nothing.

There was some doubt as to the attitude the British Government of that time might take, for not many years before they had refused to permit the arrest of persons strongly suspected of having been concerned in the murder of an Archbishop of Paris. But Melville found that there was some likelihood of a change of mind on the subject, and he, therefore, set quietly to work to track down the fugitives.

It was no easy task, for both men had friends in London, and they seldom stayed in one spot. It was a matter of weeks before François was located, and even then the information was not sufficiently solid to act upon without verification. The man was believed to be hiding in a house in Soho which was held by some persons of foreign name. Moreover, Melville did not wish to arouse any suspicion in making inquiries, for he did not wish to give François any indication that his retreat was known until he could be surprised.

So a letter was sent to the occupants notifying them that an infectious disease had been reported and that the sanitary authorities would inspect the house. Melville followed this up by appearing at the house in



INSPECTOR FIELD.

the guise of a sanitary inspector. The woman who received him was very indignant at the slur on her home. It was unthinkable that there could have been infectious disease in the house. The report must have arisen because a very dirty French family had stayed there for a time. She was relieved to say that they had gone now, and she believed that they had sailed for America. Melville made a portentous scrutiny of the sanitary arrangements, and incidentally satisfied himself that François had, indeed, eluded him for the time.

The search began over again. Melville learned that François had a dog, Carnot, named after the then French President, and this animal proved a valuable asset in following up the fugitive. Trace of the hunted man was picked up at Hoxton, where he had stayed for a couple of nights. In order that no hint of the real purpose of their activities might reach him Melville and his colleagues at this time let it be known that they were searching for a man who had escaped from quarantine. They found where he had stayed. His small stock of goods had been removed late one night by a greengrocer's cart. The only clue to the latter was that someone remembered the name on the cart finished with E. Melville's men saw all the greengrocers in the district and so found the man who could help them.

Thus the trail led to Poplar. François had by this time been joined by his wife, a virago, believed to be even more dangerous and reckless than himself. They occupied one room at the top of a dingy house, and passed as Mr. and Mrs. Muller. Some-

how or other, in spite of all the precautions that had been taken, they learned that the police were close upon them, and they became exceedingly alert to prevent all possibility of being taken unawares.

The boards of the uncarpeted stairs had been loosened so that warning might be given of any visitor. The man always carried a revolver, and on the rickety table of their room there was another pistol and a dagger to the hand of the woman. Neither man nor woman left the house, and for a police officer to walk up that narrow stair to arrest them gave promise of instant death.

Melville tried many methods of catching them off their guard. He disguised himself as a rate-collector ; he posed as a man in search of lodgings. Always the vigilance of the pair frustrated him.

Day and night detectives lurked in the neighbourhood, hoping that one or the other of the besieged couple might be tempted into the open. No one but the police and the two in the bare room at the top of the stairs guessed of the siege that was taking place. It was a test of patience, but it could not go on for ever. Melville resolved upon an assault.

"We will," he told his assistants, "try to get them to open the door ; I will rush in. If he shoots and I go down, you will have time to make sure of him."

This desperate venture in cold blood did not, as events turned out, prove to be necessary. On the very night selected for the arrest the oil for the lamp, which was the solitary illumination of the room, gave out. The man and woman peered into the street. It was

quiet as death. There was not a soul to be seen. François determined that there was nothing to fear. He stole silently out, and was quietly shadowed to a small general shop by one detective while another maintained the vigil on the house.

This was a few minutes before the time that had been fixed for the raid, and Melville himself had not arrived. He came ere François had returned from his mission, and instantly followed up the opportunity. As the anarchist emerged from the shop, detectives flung themselves upon him and a fierce struggle began. With dynamic fury, and mouthing strange French oaths, François wrested himself free and drew his revolver. Melville knocked it up just in time and it exploded harmlessly. Again the beset man fired with deadly purpose, and this time the bullet whistled among the detectives. Someone wrenched the weapon from his hand, and in a twisted, snarling heap they struggled on the ground till numbers told and a pair of handcuffs were forced upon his wrists.

Overcome, but still defiant like a trapped beast, he was escorted away to the nearest police station. Melville was not among those who accompanied him. The inspector—for Melville had not yet become a superintendent—still had work to do. There was Madame François to deal with.

Back, accompanied by a single colleague, he went to the house where she was waiting. It was in his mind that she would be expecting the return of her husband, and so there was a chance of taking her by surprise.

Only the footsteps of a single man sounded on the

stairs as they crept up to the apartment in which she was waiting. Madame heard a tap at the bolted door, and, for once thrown off her guard, she stole to open it. In the gloom she had no opportunity of recognizing the intruders before their grip was upon her. Even then, with the arms of the burly Melville about her, she managed to pull herself within reach of the table and seize the pistol and dagger. It was no time for mistaken chivalry. Before she could do any damage she was thrown to the ground and the weapons taken from her. Then she was held while she was firmly manacled.

This part of the story may well end here. Both François and his wife were extradited to France—to the consternation of others of their kidney, who had come to look upon England as a safe sanctuary for murderers. François was chiefly disgusted because he had been afforded no opportunity of “immortalizing” himself by some act of assassination. For some reason they escaped the gallows, and were, instead, sent to penal servitude for life. But that did not concern Melville. His part of the business had finished when he had arrested them and handed them over to the French police.

There remained Meunier. He was a less slap-dash, less reckless type of villain than François, but he had a greater fund of cunning. He had covered his trail with some cleverness, but at last Melville found that he had, when he fled from Paris, engaged a couple of rooms under an assumed name over a small sweet-shop in Kennington. The detectives had no sooner gained this clue than Meunier, who was as

suspicious and as elusive as a fox, dodged to another lodging at Camberwell.

But he was short of funds and there was trouble about the rent. So Meunier left, and the same evening he had the audacity to appear at a notorious Anarchist club in Soho, to attempt to borrow money from some of his revolutionary friends in this country. Naturally this move was not long in filtering through devious channels to the ears of Melville.

Meunier did not find it too easy to extract funds from his friends. However, he managed to coax sufficient to carry on for the moment. But the menacing shadow of Melville was ever coming nearer. England was no longer a safe place for a red-handed murderer, as the fate of François had proved, and he decided that, after all, he might be more secure on the Continent where there were not so many pertinacious detectives of Melville's character.

Easy though it had been to get into England, Meunier felt that it would be more difficult to get out. Although he had eluded Melville for so long he had not shaken him off. The detective had his description—perhaps his photograph. The hunted man made himself up as a hunchback, and, confident that at last he had assumed an impenetrable disguise, decided to make a dash for the boat train at Victoria Station.

It is said that it was a chance that brought Melville to Victoria at the particular moment that Meunier had chosen to catch his train. But I have small doubt that there were few continental boat trains about this time at which he or one of his staff did not take

a glance. On this particular day he strolled very casually along the long line of carriages, as it might be a passenger seeking a good seat for himself, when he observed a hunchback crouched up in the corner of one compartment reading a newspaper.

Melville passed on, but that one glance had been enough. The trained observation of the detective had penetrated the disguise. He knew that he had fixed his man. He knew also that Meunier was armed and that he would not hesitate to use his weapon. Now Melville was entirely unarmed. He did not even have a walking-stick. To enter the small compartment in an endeavour to make the arrest would give Meunier such an advantage as to make the attempt almost suicidal. He would have to be lured into the open.

Quietly Melville summoned a railway official. "I am a police officer," he explained. "There is a hunchback in the fifth carriage from the engine. I want to get him out of the train without arousing his suspicions. Will you inspect his ticket and tell him that he is in the wrong train?"

The official agreed and, with Melville keeping in the background carried out his instructions. Meunier, a little concerned at the mistake he had made, sprang hurriedly for the platform. As he emerged the detective leapt at him. Together they toppled to the ground, the anarchist underneath, fighting like a mad dog. Amazed passengers gathered round while the two men writhed and twisted for mastery.

Strong man though Melville was he had all that he could do to retain his grip. As the other found that he could not loosen it, he strove with all that

was left of his strength to drag his captor under the wheels of the train, which was on the point of starting. They were on the verge of the platform when some railwaymen came to the aid of the detective. Even then the fight went on for minutes, but the odds against the fugitive were too great. He was overpowered, and, uttering oaths and threats, he was taken away.

Murderer though he was, he, like François, managed to escape the gallows. He was sent to imprisonment for life, but while serving his sentence he was one morning found strangled in his cell. The theory was that, rightly or wrongly, some of his fellow-convicts suspected him of being a spy in the employ of the warders, and that this was their vengeance.

CHAPTER XV

THE MYSTERY OF A SWAMP

I HAVE known detectives who have won quite undeserved reputations on the strength of one lucky case. There are others who have been kept in the shadow, because their abilities have been engaged on matters that have not interested the public. But no man can go on with almost invariable success in all kinds of inquiries without winning the admiration and respect of the men of his own profession.

Therefore, when one considers the hundreds of cases in which John Wilson Murray brought astute criminals to justice, it is only right that he should be placed among the very few great detectives that the last century produced. His name is, however, perhaps less known in this country than it is in the United States and Canada where his greatest feats were achieved.

One of the exploits of this man might almost rank as an epic of detective adventure with that of Frank Froest, who practically kidnapped Jabez Balfour from the wilds of the Argentine where he had taken refuge. That story I have told in another book. Murray was in the Canadian detective service when he embarked on a world tour after a forger named Davidson, who had perpetrated big frauds on the Bank of Hamilton.

By intercepting a letter to the wife of the fugitive Murray located his man in Mexico. Thither he went, and found him working on the Mexican Central Rail-

way. The superintendent of the line agreed to make a pretext to fetch Davidson to the town of Ciudad Juarez within four hours. Murray arranged with the mayor of the town for assistance in effecting the arrest.

"Four hours later," said Murray, "we heard the tread of marching feet and the rattle of arms. We looked out, and there were the mayor, and the intendant, and sixty men in full uniform with carbines. I was astonished.

" 'I only want one man,' I said.

"The mayor and the intendant drew themselves up haughtily. 'Sir,' said the mayor, in Spanish, with a profound bow, 'permit me to inform you that dignity and ceremony make even arrests impressive in this country. Besides,' and he bowed again, 'the prisoner may be desperate.' "

So, when Davidson appeared, the sixty soldiers swooped down upon him with levelled carbines, and, in hollow square, marched him to the calaboose.

Although his man was thus safely in prison, Murray's troubles were only beginning. The obvious way back to Canada was through the United States. But the moment a prisoner extradited from Mexico was taken on any other than British territory, he could demand and receive his release. Murray therefore decided to take his prisoner by ship from Vera Cruz to Jamaica or some other British port. But no ship was available, and he was compelled to sail for Santiago. Thither they went to Port au Prince, Hayti, but still they seemed no nearer getting home.

Here it was that a native cab-driver pointed out to Murray that he was intimate with one of the black

soldiers on guard at the gaol where Davidson was temporarily confined. "If this fellow of yours is much of a bother, this yere man is a partickler friend of mine, and he'll shoot him for a couple of dollars," he explained.

"Oh, my God, no!" said the shocked detective. "You'll all be hung."

This refusal conveyed to the guard was met with a generous smile. "I'll shoot him for one and a half dollars," declared the soldier. In reporting this, Murray's nigger friend observed that "you won't get it done no cheaper."

From Hayti Murray and his prisoner ultimately took passage to Jamaica. There they got a steamer to England. At Waterloo Murray was met by Superintendent Shore, then the executive chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, and informed that Canadian warrants would not hold the prisoner in England for longer than a day. The Colonial Secretary, the Chief Magistrate at Bow Street, and the Governor of the gaol where Davidson was temporarily confined all took the same view—and there was no boat to Canada for a week.

The Canadian High Commissioner pointed an ingenious way out of the difficulty. "There is no prison in England that will refuse to keep your prisoner one night. You might tramp with him from prison to prison, and there are plenty to last until the next steamer sails from Liverpool."

This device was, however, spared to Murray by the Liverpool police, who took the risk of holding the prisoner until a boat sailed. After a storm and a break-

down Murray and his man at last reached Canada after travelling for over four months, and covering more than twenty thousand miles.

Murray's greatest triumph was an extraordinary murder case. One February morning two woodsmen were traversing the desolate and tangled wastes of a lonely tract in Canada, known as Blenheim Swamp, when they stumbled upon the body of a man. He had been lately killed—shot from behind—and there was nothing to show who he was, nor did a hasty examination of the surroundings reveal any hint of the identity of his assailant.

The two men carried the body from the swamp, and the local police communicated with the Department of Justice at Toronto. Swiftly as train could take him Detective-Inspector John Wilson Murray departed for Blenheim.

He examined the murdered man, and his trained observation told him certain things. The body was that of a young man—almost a boy—and it was clear that he had been a man of a good class of society. The clothes had an English cut, and Murray recognized the underclothes as of a kind that were only made in England. But who or what he was no man could then say. Every detail that could possibly assist in revealing his identity had been removed. The name of his tailor had been taken from his suit. The label had been cut from his bowler hat. Even the buttons that bore any distinguishing mark had been made away with.

The problem looked discouraging enough. What had brought a seemingly gently bred young English-

man to this wild spot? What motive could lie behind his murder?

First things always come first with any detective who knows his business. Before any effective move could be taken it was necessary to find out who the victim was. No subtle deductions could help here. Murray decided to call in the help of publicity. He had photographs taken of the dead man and sent them broadcast throughout the world.

Meantime the detective examined the spot where the body had been found. On his hands and knees, amid the brambles and the mud, he searched, slowly and painfully, every inch of ground in the neighbourhood. Only after three long and tedious searches was his effort rewarded. Half buried in the mud he found a cigar holder with an amber mouthpiece, marked "F. W. B."

It was a slight enough thing, but it was at least something tangible. Murray began a steady and patient line of inquiry among all the people living in the vicinity of the swamp, and while he was engaged upon this, a Mr. Reginald Birchall and his wife applied to see the body of the murdered man. They identified it as that of a young man named Benwell, who had been a fellow-passenger of theirs on the *Britannic*, a vessel which had recently arrived in New York. Their interest had been aroused, they explained, by the pictures which had been published in the newspapers.

Murray dropped his local inquiries, and hastened to see these new witnesses. He met them at an hotel. I quote his own description of their appearance.

“The gentleman,” he said, “was dressed in perfect taste. He was handsome, and easy in manner, with a certain grace of bearing that was quite attractive. He came towards me, and I saw he was about five feet nine inches tall, supple, clean cut, well built. . . . He wore a light moustache. Two dark brown eyes flashed at me in greeting. Clearly he was a man of the world, a gentleman accustomed to the good things of life, a likeable chap, who had lived well, and seen much, and enjoyed it in his less than thirty years on earth. The lady stood by the window looking out. She was a slender, pleasant-faced blonde, a bit weary about the eyes, but evidently a woman of refinement.

Mr. Birchall was anxious to help the detective—a little too anxious, Murray felt. According to his story, Benwell was a mere shipboard acquaintance with whom he and his wife had become friendly on the voyage from England. On reaching America they had travelled as far as the Niagara Falls together, and there Benwell had left them to go on his way to London, Ontario.

Murray was a judge of liars. As his quiet penetrating questions were answered with ready suavity he became convinced that the silken-mannered Mr. Birchall was lying. Why, he could not tell himself. Why should these people, if they were associated in any degree with the crime, have come forward to identify the body? He permitted no sign of his suspicion to show in his face or manner. Adroitly he parried a suggestion that he and the Birchalls should go to Toronto together, and made an engagement to meet

them at a later date at the Customs House at Niagara Falls.

It is likely that Birchall would have been less at ease had he known that Murray's first call after leaving him was at a telegraph office. Thence he sent a wire to the police at Niagara Falls, giving a full description of Birchall and his wife, who were making for that place the same day. "Shadow this man," he asked. "Do not arrest him unless he tries to cross the river to the States. I will be there Sunday night."

Having thus ensured that he could lay his hands on Birchall if he should want him, the detective made his way to London, Ontario. There the most minute inquiries satisfied him that Benwell had not been seen in the town. In that respect, at least, Birchall had been lying. It is a far cry from proving that a person has lied to proving that he has committed murder. Nevertheless, acting upon some instinct, Murray took a risk. He went over to Niagara Falls and arrested Mr. and Mrs. Birchall.

The two were charged with murder and remanded. No man knew better than Murray how fragile was the case against them so far. He had burnt his boats now, and he had to justify his action.

Fortune favours the bold. There had been staying with the Birchalls at their hotel a young man named Pelly, the son of an English clergyman of good family. From him Murray got a story that carried the case much nearer home. Pelly, Benwell, and the Birchalls had come out from England in one party. They had travelled to Buffalo together, and put up at the same hotel. From there Birchall and Benwell had made an

excursion into Canada one day. Benwell never returned. It was Pelly who had seen the dead man's portrait in the paper, and had insisted that Birchall should go and identify the body.

This explained the mad audacity of that action. Convinced now that he had the right people, Murray pursued his investigations with, if possible, additional vigour. He discovered that Benwell, like Pelly, had been trapped by an advertisement that appeared in an English newspaper. This ran :

"Canada. — University man having farm wishes to meet gentleman's son to live with him and to learn the business with a view to partnership ; must invest five hundred pounds to extend stock ; board, lodging and five per cent. interest till partnership arranged."

Both Benwell and Pelly had fallen to this lure and to the glowing descriptions that Birchall gave of life on his up-to-date farm in Canada. Pelly, as a special favour, had been allowed to pay only one hundred and seventy pounds.

It was after they had reached Buffalo that Birchall had taken Benwell to see the mythical farm. He returned alone in very good humour, said that Benwell did not like the farm and had gone off to visit some other folk to whom Birchall had given him introductions. A comparison of dates showed Murray that this must have been the day on which the murder was committed.

Two or three sinister episodes were related by Pelly. He had been taken by Birchall to view Niagara Falls. They went, at the latter's instigation, down some

secluded steps near the swirling current. At the bottom there stood a stranger watching the roaring waters. The presence of that stranger unquestionably saved Pelly's life.

The following day they went for another walk and Birchall tried to induce his companion to stand near the edge of the falls. But Pelly, who seems to have had some instinct by now of the danger in which he stood, refused to take his place in a spot where the slightest push would have sent him over. It was on their return after this episode that he heard of the murder in the swamp.

Once more Birchall tried to get rid of the man who might prove an embarrassing witness against him. He induced Pelly to walk over the bridge to the United States side of the river, and they came back over the lower suspension bridge. "It was storming and blowing," said Pelly, "when, out near the centre of the bridge, Birchall walked over by the edge and looked down on the roaring rapids. 'Come see the view; it is superb,' said Birchall, beckoning me close to the edge. I drew back. He grew white and walked on. I lagged behind out of his reach. 'Come walk with me,' he said, halting. I shook my head. He repeated his invitation. I declined. He stopped, turned squarely, and looked back. Then he advanced a step towards me. I stepped back, and was about to run over the bridge, when two men came walking across, and Birchall turned and walked over towards Canada."

It was on this and other information that he was able to gather, that Murray cabled to Scotland Yard. He found that Birchall had been at Oxford University

and had had to leave under a cloud. He had eloped to Canada with the daughter of a railway official. There he had lived by his wits without much scruple in his methods. In certain places he and his wife had called themselves "Lord and Lady Somerset," and under this title the man had succeeded in duping many people.

Murray set about to trace Birchall's movements on the day of the murder. He found people who were able to identify him as travelling with a young man on a train to Eastwood, four miles from Blenheim Swamp. He found a girl who had actually seen them together very near the swamp. He found a timber-cutter who had heard shots from a mile away. He found a farmer who could identify Birchall as a man he had seen, an hour after the shots were heard, coming from the swamp—alone. At three o'clock a girl who had known "Lord Somerset," saw him at Eastwood Station. He greeted her pleasantly, but with no trace of embarrassment. There were others who put his identification beyond all doubt.

It was discovered that, three days after the crime, Birchall had written to young Benwell's father in England asking that one hundred pounds should be paid on account of the five hundred which it had been agreed should be invested.

Thus the evidence accumulated until from the flimsy shred of suspicion on which Murray had first acted it became overwhelming. Mrs. Birchall was released. The man was convicted and hanged.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MARQUESS' JEWELS

TIME was when Edward Drew was the handsomest man in the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard. He had a taste for clothes, too, and while he was the divisional detective-inspector at Vine Street, even as later when he became a chief detective-inspector, he would not infrequently be the most distinguished figure at many fashionable functions.

But for all Drew's creased trousers and manicured hands he was a man of force and personality. He had the reputation of never "letting up" on a case, and his never failing resource earned for him, among his colleagues as in the underworld, the nickname of "Tricky" Drew. Twenty years or so ago he was one of the most dreaded of the Yard men, and, even to-day, though his hair has silvered, and he has retired to the seaside, stories of some of the coups he engineered are still told wherever C.I.D. men congregate.

It fell upon a day that the then Marquess of Anglesey, a young man of eccentric and expensive habits, decided to come to London. Now, he was a man who had a passion for the collection of jewels, mainly for his personal adornment. These jewels, which were worth perhaps £150,000, accompanied him everywhere, nonchalantly stowed away in a jewel-case. The Marquess could not be bothered with safes.

So he and his entourage settled down at the Walsingham House Hotel, where the Ritz now stands, and the young peer began to enjoy himself. That his jewels might be the object of covetous speculation among the hierarchy of the underworld never entered his head. Were they not under the competent charge of his valet, a smooth, handsome young Frenchman, named Julian Gault, whom he had picked up some six weeks before at an Enghien hotel?

One evening the Marquess decided to take a party to see the play, "Sherlock Holmes," then drawing London. It was his custom on these occasions to make a meticulous selection of the jewellery he would wear, and to that end he would have the whole of his glittering possessions laid out on his bed to simplify comparison and choice. He followed his habit that night.

It was while he was at the theatre that a chambermaid entered his bedroom. She noticed Gault steal out by another door, but for the moment she thought nothing of the incident. Then in order to remake the bed, she pulled it farther from the wall. At once she observed what had before been hidden—a dazzling heap of jewels which had apparently been thrown down in haste. Suspicion leapt to her mind, and she rushed to tell her story to her superiors.

Thus, Drew was summoned from Vine Street. I think it was William Gillette who was playing Sherlock Holmes, and it is some tribute to his powers that the Marquess nonchalantly decided that the mere loss of a hundred thousand pounds' worth of jewels should not draw him from the theatre till the show was over. The

inspector waited for him, and then it became obvious that Gault, the trusted valet, had decamped with the pick of the collection.

The inspector knew that this might be one of those big thefts committed by an amateur that sometimes do happen. On the other hand some of the bigger jewel thieves, who are always on the alert for opportunities, might very well be concerned. Descriptions of the missing gems were taken and circulated to police, pawnbrokers, and other likely quarters. Every rogue who might conceivably have had a hand in the theft had Scotland Yard men looking him up.

These were quite ordinary and usual precautions. The great thing was to find the missing valet. There was no photograph and, as usual, the descriptions of him were vague and unsatisfactory. Drew took a step that was unprecedented. He collected those friends and servants of the Marquess who knew Gault and turned them into amateur detectives. One of these he sent to every big port in the country with an introduction to the local police authorities.

As the days wore on some of these men found that there was not so much glamour and a great deal more tedium in detective work than they had supposed. Drew had to use much tact and persuasion to keep them on the job.

"On the fourth day," said Drew, "one of the gentlemen watchers at Dover, who was standing on the quay near the Channel boat, saw approaching a man wearing a heavy overcoat similar to one worn by the Marquess of Anglesey. His forehead was hidden by a slouch hat ; his face was specially noticeable be-

cause of several days' growth of beard—Gault had been clean-shaven—and his neck was encircled several times by a dirty scarf. This poor disguise was penetrated before the man put foot on the ship. He was arrested, and immediately admitted that he was the wanted man.'"

He was miserable, almost penniless, and the most rigorous search failed to disclose any trace of the missing jewels. Drew rushed down to Dover and brought his man back to London by special train. Skilfully the detective extracted the story of what had really happened.

After the Marquess had left for the theatre, Gault had gone for a stroll. By one of those coincidences that would sound impossible in fiction, but which sometimes do happen in real life, he had fallen in with a French girl with whom he had at one time been in love. This beautiful lady was incidentally—although Gault did not know this till later—an associate of one of the most daring circle of jewel-thieves in the world, and it may be imagined her delight at meeting her old lover so unexpectedly was not minimised by his naïve stories of his wealthy and eccentric master. She listened with eager attention and kept the conversation in the channels she desired.

If their meeting had really been chance, if it was absolute coincidence—and this is not certain—she must have felt that Providence had a kindly feeling towards her.

Design or accident, the girl was swift to seize opportunity. Gault, she assured him, was the only man she had ever loved. Her poverty and his were

the only things that kept them apart. But now—now ! If what he had said was true there were jewels worth a prince's ransom scattered unprotected in a room at the hotel. All that he had to do was to return and pick them up. And then together. . . . Her hand stole round his neck.

The young valet was no St. Antony. He fell to the lure. They returned to the hotel, and while she waited for him outside he went to the bedroom of the Marquess to fill his pockets at hazard with the gems on the bed. From one point of view the raid was not quite as successful as it might have been, for the entry of the chambermaid disturbed and alarmed him before he had made a clean sweep. He hurried off to the siren who was waiting without.

She took him to a flat at Chelsea, and there he made over the jewels to her. She gave him eight pounds, and, since it was well that he should not be seen for a while, bought him a few provisions, so that his meals should be secure for some days.

The unsophisticated valet was entirely unsuspecting. It never entered his mind that she could be playing him false, even when she proposed to leave him for a time, while she went away, as she said, to see certain people in regard to the disposal of the gems.

Her plan was clever to a degree. The hue and cry would concentrate on Gault who, cooped up in the flat, would be afraid to stir, while she and her real lover had got clear away. Her calculations proved right. Not until the provisions she had left gave out did the young man venture on that desperate and futile attempt to escape during which he was captured.

Drew satisfied himself that Gault's story was true. He realized that he was up against a gang of astute jewel-thieves. Gault, poor dupe, was sent to five years' penal servitude, almost as long a price for eight pounds as Goudie, the forger, paid for the box of cigars, which was his share of the hundred thousand pounds embezzled from the Bank of Liverpool.

Now began the most difficult and cunning part of the investigation. The sentence on Gault was poor satisfaction to the Marquess, who wanted his jewels back. Drew badly wanted the real thieves.

The months passed. Inquiries were pursued tenaciously in every quarter of the world. Drew located the lady in the case and her lover in the wilds of Brazil; but he was satisfied that they had passed their booty on before they had fled to that part of the world. More than that, he was confident that the transaction had taken place in Paris.

Now, at that time—the law has since been altered—it was not a crime for people abroad to have goods stolen from this country in their possession, unless it could be proved that they had been concerned in the actual theft. This fact, it will be appreciated, was of value to all sorts of gentry engaged in nefarious operations.

So when Drew found that the Anglesey jewels were in the hands of certain men in Paris the information looked like being more irritating than helpful. No one knew better than Scotland Yard that it would be an almost impossible thing to prove that they had any concern with the theft.

But "Tricky" Drew had not achieved his nick-

name without reason. He slipped over to Paris and had a talk with some of the men of the Sûreté. The English and the French detectives talked the matter over, and decided upon a daring bluff.

There were four men in the business, and the French police got hold of one very quietly. They had their own ways of persuasion, and the individual in their clutches felt that it would be wise to see reason. He was given instructions, promised a considerable reward, and no doubt felt assured that his own part in certain matters would not be too closely scrutinized.

There came a day when an emissary of Drew's entered into negotiations for the purchase of the stolen gems. He bought a few to establish confidence, and an arrangement was come to in regard to the remainder. An assignation was made to finish the deal at the Café de la Paix, one of the biggest and most fashionable restaurants in Paris.

The scene was staged with all the elaboration of a theatrical drama. The five sat down to dinner, all unaware that the adroit waiter at the table was a French detective, and the discussion on the bargain was oiled by the most expensive wines.

The climax came when the jewels were produced to be handed over in exchange for the wad of notes which the police emissary pulled from his breast pocket. The waiter-detective gave a signal. At once Drew and half a dozen men rushed forward, and the decorous restaurant became a scene of riotous confusion.

Very rarely does a British detective make an arrest in this melodramatic fashion. But there was method

in Drew's madness. Notes and jewels were promptly seized, and three of the conspirators arrested and carried off to the police station. The fourth man made an entirely plausible escape. None of the other three dreamt that they were being made the victims of an elaborate comedy.

At the station the bewildered prisoners did exactly what the astute Drew had expected. They strenuously protested that the jewels did not belong to them. They were all perfectly honest and misunderstood men. If there had been any violation of the law they were dupes. They had been drawn into the affair quite innocently. If anyone was guilty it was the missing man.

They were quite willing to make and sign statements to this effect. The dour Drew watched them attach their signatures, and you may be sure that there was no gleam of triumph in his face. He knew, though they did not, that they were signing away all right to a property which they could have legally defied him to take from them. For the fourth man had already signed away any right he may have had to Drew. That was why he had been allowed to escape with all the circumstance of verisimilitude.

That there was something wrong must have dawned upon them when the smiling French police politely told them that they were free. There was no charge against them that could be sustained. It was at this time that Drew first permitted himself the luxury of a smile.

A little reflection and a few inquiries enlightened them. Their faces must have been worth watching

when they at last fully understood how the tall English detective had duped them. They were stung to an attempt to fight. With cool insolence they began an action for the return of the gems.

That was a great mistake, for the cautious Drew still had something up his sleeve. All these men had some years before been expelled from France with loss of civil rights. They had no standing before a court. So they lost, and all that their impudence achieved was an order that they should again be sent out of the country.

The Marquess, glad enough to get his gems back, was not disposed to go to the trouble and expense involved in bringing back the woman from Brazil. She went free, for the time at least. Her further career does not concern this story.

The hapless Gault served his sentence, and on his release returned to France. He was an amateur in crime, but nothing else offered itself as a means of making a livelihood. At his very first robbery he was captured and sent to a long term of imprisonment. On becoming free once more, he was disturbed while going through the flat of a titled woman. Reckless of all but escape he killed her with a dagger. He was run down, and expiated his crime on the guillotine.

CHAPTER XVII

CROOK AND DETECTIVE

ALTHOUGH the finer principles of detection were first employed by the French police, the first men regularly employed as detectives were the Bow Street Runners. Their work was largely individual, of course, but they were the first men who can be regarded as professional detectives, giving their whole time to their work, and using the word in distinction to that of spy or informer.

The first organized detective bureau was that created by Vidocq in the early part of the last century. This man, a notorious French criminal, was selected for his job on the plausible principle of the old proverb : "Set a thief to catch a thief."

Vidocq had a colourful criminal career. Entirely unscrupulous, with a remarkable fund of ingenuity, and of unquestioned daring, he hesitated at little. Time after time he was taken, and time after time he escaped.

He knew himself for a remarkable man. "There was no gaoler whose vigilance I could not escape, no irons that I could not break through, no wall that I could not penetrate. I was no less famed for courage and skill, and it was the general opinion that I was capable of any deed of renown in case of need. I was considered among robbers as the most cunning and the most bold."

Certainly, he was the best-known rogue in France when he offered himself to the police as a spy to betray his old confederates. The offer was not accepted, and a little later Vidocq himself was betrayed for his connection with an illicit coining business. Then Vidocq again solicited employment as a spy. The authorities yielded, and he was sent, nominally under sentence of eight years in chains, to one of the Paris prisons. There he was so successful in his treachery that it was determined to give him a chance to show what he could do in a larger sphere of operations.

So a convincing escape was staged, and Vidocq was promoted from spy to "secret agent" at large. He had the *entrée* to all the low haunts of the city, and won the confidence of many infamous characters on the strength of his old reputation. He reported faithfully to the police.

"Each day," he wrote, with pride, "increased the number of my discoveries. Of the many who were committed to prison, there were none who did not owe their arrest to me, and yet not one of them for a moment suspected my share in the business. The thieves of my acquaintance looked upon me as their best friend and true comrade; the others esteemed themselves happy to have an opportunity of initiating me in their secrets, whether from the pleasure of conversing with me or in the hope of benefiting by my counsels."

One of the first exploits with which Vidocq was concerned was the arrest of two desperate ruffians named St. Germain and Boudin. Over a dinner and a bottle of wine they proposed that Vidocq should assist them

in the murder and robbery of two old men who lived in a secluded street in Paris.

Vidocq played his part adroitly. With seeming reluctance he was persuaded to agree to take part in the plot. Day after day the three met to discuss ways and means. Then, to the consternation of Vidocq, St. Germain suddenly one evening declared that there was a rumour afloat that the other was in the pay of the police, and that his escape had been a "frame-up."

The ready-witted secret agent met the charge with equanimity. He had heard the rumour, he explained. In fact, he had set it abroad himself to avoid the unwelcome attentions of men he feared might betray him.

His plausible manner completely deceived the other, who at once apologized, and went on to explain that the original plan had been dropped in favour of another scheme which was to be carried out that very evening. This was the robbery of a banker's house. Vidocq and another man, named Debenne, were to keep guard without while St. Germain and Boudin carried out the actual crime—which incidentally involved the murder of two persons who were guarding the banker's treasure.

As a pledge of good faith it was decided that the four should spend the day together. This was not at all to the mind of Vidocq, who, though compelled to agree, realized the peril to which he was exposed. "I knew not what saint to invoke or what pretext to invent to effect my escape. St. Germain would have blown out my brains at the least suspicion, and how

to act or what was to be done, I knew not. My only plan was to resign myself to the event, be it what it might, and this determination taken, I affected to busy myself with the preparations for our crime, the very sight of which redoubled my perplexity and horror.’’

Vidocq’s resource, however, was not exhausted. He induced his associates to send a messenger to his house for wine, which was brought back by Vidocq’s mistress, a girl named Annette. To her he contrived to pass a note : “ When you leave this place disguise yourself, and do not for an instant lose sight of myself, St. Germain, or Boudin. Be careful to avoid all observation ; and, above all, be sure to pick up anything I may let fall and to convey it as directed.”

When the gang set out on their mission they first of all went to a shop to buy black crape, to be converted into masks. Here Vidocq, who was now in possession of the full details of the scheme, managed to write another note, which he slipped to the girl who was shadowing them.

By the time the robbers had reached the scene of their proposed enterprise, the police were in ambuscade. As they disclosed themselves, Boudin and St. Germain offered a fierce resistance, in which several police officers were wounded. “ For myself,” says Vidocq, “ as I took no part in the engagement, I was not likely to come to any harm : nevertheless, that I might sustain my part to the end, I fell on the field of battle as though I had been mortally wounded. The next instant I was wrapped in a covering, and in this manner conveyed to a room where Boudin and St.

Germain were ; the latter appeared deeply touched at my death ; he shed tears, and it was necessary to employ force to remove him from what he believed to be my corpse."

The secret of Vidocq's trade could not be preserved for ever, and it gradually leaked out among the underworld of Paris. But he was a master of disguise, and his intimate acquaintance with the habits and persons of thieves made him feel reasonably safe in undertaking his many dangerous missions. Not that he was afraid to face them in his proper person, for he had courage. He became the principal secret agent of police with two assistants—like himself old criminals—and, with an appreciation of one of the elements of detection, determined that it would be useful to look over all convicted prisoners, in order to take a mental note of their appearance for future contingencies. The chief of police warned him that he ran extreme peril, and that his safety could not be ensured. Vidocq, nevertheless, persisted and entered the place where the convicts were assembled to be fettered.

"Instantly a most tumultuous uproar ensued, mingled with cries 'Down with the spies ! Down with the villain ! Down with Vidocq !' were heard from all the windows, where the prisoners, mounted on each other's shoulders with faces pressed against the bars, were collected in groups. . . . I soon recovered all my courage, and no longer burdened by a shadow of fear, walked boldly forward with my eyes fixed on the windows, and advanced to those of the lower storey. At this moment a new burst of rage was evinced by the prisoners. They were not men, but ferocious

beasts, who were roaring. . . . In the midst of this outrageous din, I made a signal that I wished to speak : a dead silence ensued after the tempest, and they listened.

“ ‘Scum of the mob,’ I said, ‘why do you howl thus? It was when I grabbed you that you should have not cried out but defended yourself. Shall you be any the better for thus reproaching me? You treat me as a spy ; well, I am a spy, but so are you also, for there is not one amongst you who has not offered to sell his comrade to me, in the hopes of thereby obtaining an impunity which I would not grant you. I have not spared you, I know. What motives have I for doing so?’ ”

So he taunted them, and when the imprecations burst out again he boldly entered into the very middle of two hundred men and defied them to harm him. “ ‘Now, gentlemen,’ said I, to the galley slaves, ‘kill him—you see that they advise you well ; try.’ I do not know what revolution of opinion actuated them, but the more I was in their power, the more they became appeased. At the termination of the fettering, those men, who had sworn to exterminate me, were so much softened that many of them begged me to render them slight services.”

On another occasion, Vidocq volunteered to raid a disreputable resort haunted by the vilest and most desperate ruffians. With his two assistants and eight gendarmes he carried out his purpose, although his superiors had expressed the opinion that it could not be done without a battalion of soldiers. Leaving the gendarmes at the door, he walked into the place,

where a dance was in progress, and ordered the music to stop. Then he commanded the company to leave and, spite of threats and lowering looks, they obeyed. As they filed past him, he deftly placed a chalk mark on the back of those persons who were wanted by the police, and they were handcuffed by the gendarmes as they emerged. A long chain of felons was ultimately conducted to the prefecture.

In 1817, Vidocq was ordered to raise the first Brigade de Sûreté, and in a few years he had twenty-eight men under his command. All of these were old gaol-birds, and were picked rather for boldness and cunning than for any moral qualities. They did effective work in ridding Paris of some of its worst characters, but there were dark hints that neither Vidocq nor his men were above taking advantage of their position. Vidocq met one of these charges by ordering all his people to wear gloves—the point being that pockets can only be picked by the bare hand.

Vidocq had not been long in command of his new force when his aid was invoked in an extraordinary case of murder. An epidemic of murders and robberies had broken out on many of the highways leading to Paris. One of the victims was a butcher who, carrying a considerable sum of money, was on his way to a local fair. He had stopped at an inn for refreshment, and here he fell in with two other wayfarers who were going in the same direction. As night was near, the butcher was glad to have company, and the three proceeded together. At a lonely part of the road the butcher was stabbed and left for dead, while his companions made off with his money.

But the butcher was not dead. He was picked up alive, and carried to the nearest village, after giving a description of his assailants. Something of modern detective particularity was observed in the preliminary steps of investigation. Says Vidocq : " Accurate impressions were taken of the footmarks ; buttons, fragments of paper dyed in blood were carefully collected : on one of these pieces, which appeared to have been hastily torn off to wipe the blade of a knife found at no great distance from it, were observed some written characters, but they were without any connecting sense. . . . Upon more narrowly exploring the spot where Fontaine had been lying, a second morsel was picked up, which presented every appearance of being part of a torn address. By dint of close examination the following words were deciphered :

A Monsieur Rao—
 Marchand de vins, Bar—
 Roche—
 Cli—

It was with this fragment, when he was called in, that Vidocq made a start. By the exercise of a little ingenuity he reconstructed the address as :

Marchand de vins,
 Barrière Rochechouart,
 Chaussée de Clignancourt.

From this he came to the conclusion that the assailants were known to, and probably in league with, a wine merchant at the address given. He had little doubt that he could put a name to the merchant, and before the end of the day he had a person, named

Raoul, who lived at the Barrière Rochechouart, under the observation of his assistants.

Raoul had a bad personal reputation, and his wine-shop was a resort that had long been under the unfavourable attention of the police. He was believed to deal in contraband, and was suspiciously intimate with one or two notorious rogues. He and his friends often left the house in the evening and returned, apparently tired out and covered with mud, in the early morning. Among the visitors to this man noticed by Vidocq's emissaries was a man who corresponded to the description of one of those who had attempted to murder the butcher, and who limped as though suffering from a recent injury.

Vidocq himself determined to have a look at this person, and after a patient vigil outside Raoul's premises had pointed out to him a man he instantly recognized as a finished scoundrel, named Court, who was likely to boggle at little, since he had already been convicted of highway robbery and other serious crimes.

Court was quietly shadowed to his home, and there Vidocq arrested him and his wife, without, however, telling them the real nature of the charge. He hinted that they were wanted for smuggling.

Next, Vidocq visited Raoul and confidentially informed him that he was suspected of sedition, and had in his possession a quantity of disloyal and immoral songs. On this pretext he searched the house with the enthusiastic aid of the other.

"In order to give a colouring to the story I had first told him," said Vidocq, "we affected the greatest

solicitude respecting his papers. He gave me the key of his *escritoire*. I seized upon a bundle of papers, and the first upon which I cast my eyes was a direction, part of which had been torn off. Instantly, the shape of the torn fragment, on which was written the address found on the place of the murder, occurred to my recollection. The piece now before me had evidently formed part of it."

The close scrutiny of the torn sheet warned Raoul that Vidocq was concerned with something more serious than a mere political offence. He sprang to a drawer in which were loaded pistols, but before he could reach them he had been overpowered by Vidocq and his assistants. He was arrested and carried to the prefecture of police for examination. A quarter of an hour later—this was towards midnight—Court and his wife were also fetched from prison for the same purpose. They were kept carefully apart, and before the magisterial interrogation Vidocq determined to put them under a sort of third degree.

Court was told that he was accused of murder—of what murder Vidocq was careful not to say. He succeeded so far that the man actually confessed to shooting a poultry dealer. He was led to admit that he was guilty of the attack on the butcher, but for a long while persisted that he had no accomplices. At length Vidocq extracted from him another admission—that Raoul had been concerned in the latter crime. But he would give no further information.

Vidocq stole softly to the cell where Raoul was asleep. He had determined upon an experiment. Leaning over the sleeping man he whispered low

questions in his ear. For a quarter of an hour this scene went on. "What became of the knife with which you murdered your victim?" asked the secret agent, and Raoul awoke with a start and a cold perspiration on his face. Vidocq attempted to turn his agitation to account by suddenly throwing at him the news that his accomplice had confessed. But Raoul saw the trap. "You are wasting your time," he declared.

He refused to believe that Court had confessed, and readily agreed to a confrontation. So Vidocq went off to Court. That villain did not care to face the friend he had betrayed, but Vidocq was persistent, and the two were brought together.

Court was ingenious in the method of his disclosure. "I am glad to hear that you have followed my example and made a full confession," he observed. For the moment, Raoul stared at him as if dumbfounded. Then he laughed and congratulated Vidocq. Having obtained a second confession, Vidocq stayed to supper with the two murderers, and they passed a congenial evening together.

The two men were next taken to the hospital, where the butcher they had attempted to kill identified them. So far all was well. But Vidocq was convinced that at least one other man had been concerned, and he made it his business to keep on the most friendly terms with them. Thus he extracted from them the name of one Pons Gerard, who lived at a little village in the department of the Aisne. Vidocq set out to capture this man.

Disguised as a horse-dealer, and accompanied by

two assistants who posed as grooms, Vidocq made his way to the district where Gerard was located. He pushed his inquiries while on the journey, and discovered that Gerard, although known to be the author of many revolting crimes, had established so terrible a reputation that the local authorities did not care to interfere with him.

At a low-class inn, which Gerard was known to frequent, Vidocq imposed sufficiently on the woman innkeeper as a friend of Gerard's that she was quite willing to give him all the information she had of the robber's movements. So he tracked Gerard to a place, where the other, who seems to have held some parish office, was superintending some thirty men or so who were repairing the highway. The agents of police had no difficulty in recognizing their man, but Vidocq realized that any immediate attempt at arrest might be too risky. Should Gerard have the support of his workmen, the three police officers would easily be overwhelmed.

Vidocq walked straight up to the other and hailed him with the familiarity of an old acquaintance. Gerard bluntly denied that he had any remembrance of meeting before, and Vidocq whispered in his ear :

"I am a friend of Raoul and Court and am sent by them to you."

Gerard's attitude immediately changed. He embraced Vidocq, warmly welcomed his two "ostlers," and invited them all to accompany him to a village where they could suitably celebrate the meeting over a bottle of wine. Thus Gerard was lured away from

his companions. Over the wine, Vidocq explained that Raoul and Court had been arrested. He himself had been taken at the same time but, as there was nothing against him, he had been allowed to go free, and at the request of the other two had come to warn Gerard.

Gerard was grateful. He asked for more details, and learned that it was Vidocq who had made the arrest. He spent some little effort in forceful description of what would happen to Vidocq if ever he came within reach. Let Vidocq tell the rest of the story :

“ ‘ Oh, you are like all the rest of them talking of what you would do ; and yet if he were before you at this moment, you would sit perfectly still and be the first to offer him a glass of wine.’ (At the time I was saying this I held out my glass, which he filled.)

“ ‘ I ! I offer him wine ! May a thousand devils seize me first !’

“ ‘ Yes, you, I say, would invite him to drink with you.’

“ ‘ I tell you I would die sooner.’

“ ‘ Then you may die as soon as you please, for I am Vidocq, and I arrest you.’

“ ‘ How, how ; what is this ?’

“ ‘ Yes, I arrest you !’ and approaching my face to his, ‘ I tell you, villain, I arrest you, you are *done* ; and if you dare to stir one step I will tweak off your rascally nose. Clement, handcuff this worthy gentleman.’ ”

This, by Vidocq’s account, broke up systematic robbery on the highways near the capital. Court and Raoul suffered on the guillotine. Gerard, against

whom there was no definite proof of murder, was imprisoned for life.

After Vidocq's ten years in charge of the Sûreté a new prefect of police was appointed. Vidocq, for various reasons, decided to resign his official post. He is said to have made a very good thing out of it, how, it might be indiscreet to inquire too closely. He started in business as a manufacturer of paper boxes. To this he added what must have been the first of all private inquiry agencies, and shortly found himself the head of a large and expanding business with thousands of cases to deal with. His offices were luxuriously equipped, and he was doing well when he was arrested for fraud and "abuse of confidence." There can be little doubt that he was mixed up in some shady transactions, but there is equally no doubt that the official police were jealous of his success, and quite anxious to make any excuse to badger him. He was acquitted, but in later years he was again arrested, and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment, which was reversed on appeal. But he was ruined by lawsuits, and in his old age supported himself by lecturing on his experiences. He died in 1857.

His successor in the Brigade de Sûreté was one of his old lieutenants, a man named Coco-Latour, who carried on the work in the old way. But the system of the gaol-bird detectives could not last, and they were abolished in 1832, when it was determined that French detectives in future should be recruited from men of unblemished character.

CHAPTER XVIII

PINKERTON WAYS

THERE are scores of private detectives, or private inquiry agents, in England, and thousands in America. This development of detection, as a commercial enterprise, is a comparatively modern thing. Time was when anyone who could afford to pay was able to secure the assistance of a Scotland Yard man, but those days have long passed. Nowadays, the police detective is concerned with crime in its official sense. In the pursuit of his calling, he regards no interests but those of justice. He is entirely an officer of the law, and his credentials are unassailable.

The private detective is different. He may be called upon to serve any person for many purposes. His business covers a wide field, and, because his personal and financial interests are involved, he is exposed to temptations which do not affect the men of the official detective bureaux. He may, in fact, be a very shady person.

There are many matters calling for investigation which are outside the scope of police work. There is divorce business, for instance—although there are some agencies of high standing which will not touch this class of work. There is blackmail, which the police do not handle unless the victim promises to prosecute. There are matters involving family scandal. There are business frauds. Some insurance assessors

have on their staff retired Scotland Yard men to follow up claims that may be fraudulent. Many solicitors entrust delicate inquiries to firms of inquiry agents, which can only be handled by men skilled in such matters. In England the private detective may find himself dealing with many things that are on the fringe of crime, but he never takes a leading part in the pursuit and capture of an offender. That is the business of the police. Occasionally, the roads of the private and the police detective march together for a part of the way, but their ultimate objects may differ. A private detective, for instance, may have as his main object the recovery of stolen gems ; the police would be more anxious to arrest the thief.

In the United States, on the other hand, distinctions are not always so finely drawn, so that a private detective will find himself doing what is in effect police work. Theoretically, as in England, the American private detective has no special powers of arrest ; but in practice it is generally possible for such a man to arrange to be sworn in as a deputy sheriff of a district, which gives practically all the rights of a police officer.

It is to be doubted whether such an organization as Pinkerton's could ever have been built up in England. Its founder, William Allan Pinkerton, was originally a cooper in a small Illinois town. There he accidentally found the retreat of a gang of horse-thieves and coiners, and assisted the authorities in breaking them up. This led to his aid being requested by some prominent citizens of the neighbourhood in tracing out some banknote forgers who were known to be in the

neighbourhood. Pinkerton carried out this mission successfully and, as a result, suddenly found his services as a detective in such request that he was forced to abandon his coopering trade and set up the agency in Chicago that has become since world famous.

Chicago, then the centre of the Western grain trade, was at that time rapidly expanding. But prosperity brought with it certain perils. "A number of bold robberies had been committed," wrote Pinkerton, "and, to the great annoyance of well-meaning citizens, very few arrests of the perpetrators had been made. The police force of that time, be it stated, was a kind of haphazard organization under the command of a City Marshal; and I was about the only person known as a criminal detective."

Thus it was that business came to Pinkerton and his reputation grew, so that when the American Civil War broke out he was called upon to act as chief of the Federal Secret Service. When he returned to his business after the war he began to develop it on a big scale.

This canny Scotsman had sound business notions. He trusted none of his men until he had proved them. He attached to his agency a reputation for honesty which was far beyond that of any American police force for years afterwards. His clients were promised nothing but service. He laid it down :

"This agency only offers its services at a stated sum per diem for each detective employed on an operation, giving no guarantee of success, except in the reputation for reliability and efficiency; and any

person in its service who shall, under any circumstances, permit himself or herself to receive a gift, reward, or bribe shall be instantly dismissed from the service."

In the uncertainty of those times, great business organizations found that it paid them to put criminal investigations into the hands of Pinkerton's Agency. Pinkerton's was honest; Pinkerton's had an efficient organization that stretched across the continent. And Pinkerton's had begun to collect and collate a mass of information on rogues and their methods that was more complete than anything in the States. Bankers, railway companies, mine owners, express companies were among the regular clients of the agency. A Pinkerton man could neither be bribed nor shaken off. Scotland Yard and other European official detective bureaux found that it paid them to keep in touch with Pinkerton's. So, in many respects, Pinkerton's became a sort of national detective force, which grew ever more formidable as the years went on. In the course of time other agencies started on similar lines. To-day, the bulk of these national agencies in America are in close touch with the official police forces, and in most criminal matters work in harmony. Not many years ago a Pinkerton man, George S. Dougherty, was chosen as Deputy-Commissioner and Chief of Detectives of New York City.

There are many stories of successes achieved by Pinkerton men. The one I have to tell began in the little village of Edgewood, some miles out of New York. One Sunday morning, a startled churchgoer stumbled upon the body of a man lying upon the village

common, and a hasty examination disclosed a clear case of murder. The victim had been battered to unconsciousness by an oaken barrel-stave found near the body, and then stabbed. He had been stripped of everything but his underclothes, and he was an entire stranger to the locality. In a pocket of the under-vest was found thirty-five dollars, which seemed to show that robbery could be no part of the motive for the deed. A hat was lying near the body.

The village policeman—sheriff was his official title—took pompous charge of the case. His opinion of his own capacity to deal with a mystery of this calibre was not shared by many of the local residents who, out of regard for the reputation of their village, determined that Pinkerton's should be called in to make an independent inquiry.

So, while the sheriff was making blundering arrests of perfectly innocent people, the Pinkerton superintendent, Mr. George Bangs, began methodical and scientific investigation. The only clue from which he could make a start was the letters "A. B." woven into the shirt which the dead man had worn.

Local suspicion ran heavily against the disreputable keeper of a village inn. Bangs thought it worth while to send a detective—operative is the word in favour in America—named Brockman to stay at this place, under the guise of a house-painter, to see what he could pick up. The superintendent himself returned to New York. He had formed an impression that the dead man was a German, and with this assumption he advertised a description and the nationality of the murdered man.

Thus there was found a man who was able to settle the question of identity beyond doubt. The victim was proved to be a young German artist named Adolph Bohner, who had been in America but a month or two. He had few acquaintances in the country, and on the face of it there was no reason why anyone should murder him.

Bangs went carefully over the dead man's rooms in New York. One of those miraculous chances that sometimes come to the aid of the alert detective resulted. For Bohner had kept a diary, and the last entry in it read: "To-morrow will go to Edgewood to meet August Franssen who promises to pay his indebtedness to me."

Here was something of vital import. But it was a far cry, first to finding the man Franssen, and then to proving him guilty of murder. The far-reaching tentacles of the Pinkerton organization at once began to grope for further information. In many countries of Europe they found traces. He was a ne'er-do-well with a shady record, by trade a shoemaker, and he had lived in Strasburg. It was from Strasburg that Adolph Bohner had come.

Inquiries were pressed in that German town, and the two men were linked. There was a girl in it, of course. Of the two she had chosen Bohner as her lover, and he had left for America to seek his fortune. Franssen also saw glittering possibilities in the new land, and, stealing his passage money from his father, he had embarked on the same steamer as the artist, who was more than a little astonished when he met his rival on board.

Whatever their feelings towards each other, as strangers in a strange land they were thrown together. Bohner, steady and industrious, did fairly well. Not so Franssen. He found work easily enough, but he wanted to see life, and again and again he borrowed money from his compatriot until the young artist—this was shown by his diary—firmly and definitely refused to loosen his purse strings any more. Then it was that Franssen had disappeared.

Two problems beset Bangs. He had to find the missing man, and to prove beyond doubt that he was guilty. A Pinkerton detective of German birth, named Mendelsohn, who had some knowledge of bootmaking, was given the job of tracing him out.

Mendelsohn, disguised as a German bootmaker, began to make inquiries. He found a boot factory from which Franssen had been sacked three months before. From there he was led to a drinking saloon which had been one of the suspected man's haunts. At that place the scent weakened. Franssen owed money, and had not been seen for weeks. However, there was a girl——

The detective managed to obtain the last known address of the girl in New York, but on following it up he again drew a blank. She had left for a farm in the country. With dogged pertinacity he followed her there.

He arrived at a country station late one afternoon and discovered that the farmhouse he was seeking was a mile and a half away, and that there was no possibility of obtaining a conveyance. A mile and a half, however, was nothing to an active man, and Men-

delsohn set out to walk. He had covered some part of the distance when, a little to his consternation, he found himself an object of pronounced interest to a large and fierce yellow dog. Neither soft words nor threats altered the obvious resolution of the animal, and the detective sprinted for a handy tree. At the expense of a coat-tail he gained temporary safety, but the dog, which was very large and very fierce, made it perfectly evident that it had time to spare and was determined to wait.

From this predicament he was rescued by a stranger who had the fortune to be armed with a heavy stick. Mendelsohn thanked his preserver, and from him made sure of the direction of the house he was seeking. Thus, he came at last to the farmhouse. The girl was preparing supper as he arrived. She was suspicious of a stranger who knew her name and something of her career, but Mendelsohn had ready a plausible and circumstantial story to account for his inquiries about Franssen. He was, he said, a fellow-workman who had heard that Franssen was out of a job. Now there was an excellent and well paid berth vacant which he was anxious to tell Franssen about, but he had lost track of him. Hearing that he had been paying attentions to the girl, Mendelsohn had been bold enough to seek her out to see whether she could tell him of her lover's whereabouts.

"Why," said the girl, "he has just left here. You must have passed him on the road. He has not been gone twenty minutes."

With chagrin the detective realized that the benefactor who had freed him from the attentions of the



"BIG BILL" PINKERTON.

yellow dog was the very man whom he had been trying to trace. Yet he held a smiling face to the girl and carried the conversation farther. She and Franssen, he learned, had quarrelled. She resentfully declared that she did not know where he was living, nor did she care. However, by the exercise of some tact the detective drew from her that Franssen was a very regular attendant at a beer saloon in Forsyth Street, New York, and with this Mendelsohn had to be content.

However unsatisfactory from one point of view, the encounter with Franssen had given the detective a knowledge of the wanted man's appearance. So Mendelsohn began to haunt the beer saloon in Forsyth Street until a weary vigil resulted in a sight of Franssen. Keeping himself out of sight, the detective hung on to his man until he had become satisfied that Franssen was employed at a certain shoe factory. There Mendelsohn offered himself for employment and was engaged.

Apparently Franssen did not recognize the man he had rescued from the dog. Mendelsohn sought his acquaintance, and so well did he play his cards that in a few days the two had become boon companions. Bangs, however, did not feel that there had yet been acquired enough evidence to bring the crime decisively home to the suspected man. He urged Mendelsohn to continue to cultivate the other assiduously, and to keep his eyes and his ears open.

So Mendelsohn continued to frequent the beerhouse with Franssen, and there at length another link was forged in the chain. An acquaintance commented on

the hat that Franssen was wearing. "What have you done with the one that I sold you?" he asked.

"Oh, I changed it for this," retorted Franssen, lightly.

By midday Mendelsohn was in Bangs' office to procure the hat that had been found on the scene of the murder. He wore it in place of his own, and sought out the man who had sold Franssen his hat. After a drink or two the other said: "So you're the fellow Franssen stuck with my old hat."

Mendelsohn laughingly agreed. The hat was examined, and its erstwhile owner declared that he would know it among a thousand. This conversation was reported to Bangs, who at once set to work to find out the sort of hat that Bohner had worn at about the time of the murder. As a result it was established beyond reasonable doubt that Franssen had changed hats with his victim.

While all this was happening, matters were progressing with another phase of the investigation. Brockman, who had been sent down to Edgewood to masquerade as a house-painter, had been alertly busy. He found that a man corresponding to the description of Franssen had been employed for a short time, about the period of the murder, at a shoemaker's shop in a small town a few miles distant. The detective induced the cobbler to give him a small job of painting, and he was invited to stay in the house till it was finished. He made the most of his time. The shoemaker's wife, a loquacious soul, was willing to gossip. From her he learned that Franssen had worked there for ten days, beginning a day or two before the murder was dis-

covered. Mark that. No one could at that time have known of the murder but the perpetrator. Yet Franssen told this woman that he had heard of a murder in Edgewood, and asked if it was true.

One of the household of the shoemaker was a servant-girl to whom Franssen had paid attention. Brockman deemed it worth while to gain her favour. Thus it was he found that the suspect had presented her with a pair of slightly worn gloves. He took pains to get a glimpse of them. On the inside he found the significant letters "A. B."

Finishing his job of painting, Brockman returned to Edgewood and sent a report to Bangs. To it he added the fact, extracted from the wife of the inn-keeper of the village inn, that on the night of the murder a man calling himself a shoemaker, and whose description was very like that of Franssen, had taken supper at the inn, and then bilked his host by slipping away without paying.

The net was drawing very close. The final proof was supplied by Mendelsohn. Although without suspicion, least of all of his new found friend, Franssen had come to the conclusion that the air of Western America was better suited to his health than that of New York. There was only one practical difficulty in his way. He was short of funds. In his trouble he turned to Mendelsohn and asked for a loan. The other hesitated. Then it was that the suspect offered to sell for five dollars a pawnticket for a man's suit of clothes. Mendelsohn took the ticket and promised the money by the morning.

On some excuse the detective got away and went

straight to Bangs. Together they redeemed the clothes and carried them to a friend of Bohner's. He at once identified them as a suit that had belonged to the dead man.

It was no longer necessary to wait. A warrant was obtained, and it was arranged that Mendelsohn should return and keep in close touch with Franssen until he could be arrested in the act of flight.

The two finished the day's work together. The murderer collected such wages as were due to him, and then Mendelsohn insisted upon accompanying him for a farewell drink, and to see him off at the station.

It was after their departure that Bangs called at the factory. He was informed that they had gone, and with a shrewd idea of their objective he made his way to one of the main line railway stations. There it was that he came up with his quarry, with the vigilant Mendelsohn, who was growing uneasy as the time for the murderer's train came nearer, in attendance.

A hand fell on the shoulder of the suspect. A stern voice rang in his ear. "Your name is August Franssen. I arrest you for the murder of Adolph Bohner."

With a cry of alarm Franssen dropped his bag and attempted to run. But strong hands were gripping him, and steel handcuffs were forced about his wrists. The game was played out.

Yet after all he escaped the gallows. For some reason, hard to understand, he was found guilty of murder in the second degree, and got away with a long term of imprisonment.

CHAPTER XIX

MRS. WERTHEIM—SPY

THE Special Branch at Scotland Yard does not advertise. Its activities are cloaked in a discreet silence whether they are concerned with Communists, suffragettes, anarchists, Sinn Feiners, or spies, for seldom does its work finish in the glare of a public court.

Nevertheless, it does its job with silent and relentless efficiency. When war with Germany broke out it was the Special Branch that cleaned up, in the first month or two, practically all the big and highly trained spies who had imagined that they were entirely unsuspected. Thus Herr Steinhauer, head of the German espionage headquarters, was left in a position of some embarrassment. With German thoroughness he met the situation by starting a school for spies, and recruits were raked in from adventurers of all classes at a cost of one hundred pounds cash, and the promise of thirty pounds a month—not high pay when the risks of the business were considered.

This story begins with the arrival at Tilbury, nine months after the war began, of "Mr. Reginald Rowland," a handsome, well-groomed young gentleman, bearing an American passport, an American accent, and credentials that proved him to be a musician and the agent for the Norton B. Smith Company, a firm of piano manufacturers in New York.

Scotland Yard was unostentatiously interested in

his advent, for a tip had come from Rotterdam that he might not be all that he seemed. So a quiet eye was kept upon him.

He stayed at an hotel in Bedford Square, where he posed as a genial and well-to-do business man. Within a day or two, he called upon a lady living in the Hammersmith Road. This was a woman, not without good looks of a sort, of plump build, and inclined to overdress. This lady, who was something over thirty years of age, was Mrs. Lizzie Wertheim, the wife of a naturalized Britisher, who had been deserted by her husband. She had lived much abroad, had high spirits, more than a touch of temperament, and a certain coarse charm of manner. She also had an unquenchable habit of extravagance. Rowland had money.

For a day or two they hit the high spots of town together—a somewhat striking couple. They dined at the best restaurants, they went to theatres, they rode in Rotten Row together on the best horses that could be hired, and they made themselves friendly with a Red Cross officer, whom they induced to accompany them on many of their expeditions about town. And all the while, Inspector Trevor Fitch, of the Special Branch, was waiting for something to happen that would reveal their purpose.

Within a week, Mrs. Wertheim, who seems to have acquired, even in so short a time, a considerable sway over Rowland, had carried him off down to Bournemouth, where they put up at one of the best hotels in the town, and went off for long motor rides along the coast in a big and fast motor-car. The lady spent money with a free and regal hand. She insisted

that she must have a maid. All the protests of the other, who saw himself being called to a stern account for this expenditure, were met with a light laugh. Business might be business for German spies, but that was no reason why a high-spirited lady should not enjoy herself.

All this was known at Scotland Yard. The stalwart Fitch was ordered to let them enjoy themselves. By this time, he knew that Rowland's real name was Breeckow, and that he was undoubtedly an emissary of the enemy secret service. There would be time enough to act when the man and the woman had showed their hands more clearly.

The joyous escapade on the south coast came to an end. Rowland, who held the purse, found that funds were running low. It was time to get down to business.

The man returned to his hotel in Bedford Square. Mrs. Wertheim took train to Scotland, where she was to exercise her fascinations on any naval officer or other person from whom she might wheedle information of the disposition or of the plans of our fleets.

She appeared in dazzling splendour at the Arlington Hotel, in Edinburgh, and let it be known that she was a wealthy woman who intended to make a prolonged holiday tour through Scotland. She courted, rather than shunned, observation. Somehow, she managed to hire a fast motor-car, and in it she dallied about the Firth of Forth. She was clumsy enough in her methods to arouse the suspicions of at least two naval officers to whom she had made herself agreeable. But there were other people more ingenuous who accepted her at her own valuation, and she did,

in fact, manage to pick up some bits of information, which she embodied in reports to her confederate in London.

Her tour began to take her farther afield. She appeared at the best hotels at many places on the Scottish coast. She was certainly at Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth, and Dundee. And from these places she wrote to Rowland.

Meanwhile, the immaculate Rowland led a comfortable life in London, all unconscious that he could scarcely wink without that fact becoming known to Detective-Inspector Fitch and his colleagues. He went to his bedroom early at night, and there he wrote letters that were addressed to Messrs. Dierks and Company, who were supposed to be scrap-iron merchants in Rotterdam. These he posted in the ordinary way.

It was unfortunate for him that the Special Branch knew all about Dierks and Company. The headquarters of this company was in a side street in Rotterdam, and was a branch of the spy organization of the Germans. So it was as a matter of course that every letter addressed to them came under very rigid scrutiny when they reached the postal censorship at Portugal House, in Kingsway.

On the face of them, Rowland's letters were quite harmless business epistles on his struggles to sell pianos in the British market. There was nothing to suggest that they were the reports of a spy.

But the tricks of the trade were well known at Portugal House. Among the equipment for dealing with them was an electric flatiron. There is a mixture

of formalin and lemon juice used for invisible writing, which will display itself on the application of heat. A touch with the flatiron, and all the labours of Mr. Rowland and Mrs. Wertheim had been brought to nothing. The man had written his own death warrant between the lines of his letters.

There was the story of his activities since he had reached England, complaints of Mrs. Wertheim's extravagance, of his need for more money, of the results of the woman's expedition up north.

Still the Special Branch held its hand. They wanted everything to be complete. Letter after letter was posted by Rowland, and each one was held and read by the authorities till there was little more that they could learn. Then a move was made.

One morning, three quiet, unobtrusive men strolled aimlessly into the smoking-room of Rowland's hotel as he was smoking an after-breakfast cigarette. They were Fitch and two other detectives.

"Well," he demanded in a pleasant voice, as they accosted him. "What can I do for you fellows?"

"We want to see you in your bedroom for a minute or two, so that we can talk quietly," said Fitch.

Rowland was no fool. It must have been apparent to him that the game was up. Yet he played his part at this stage with superb nonchalance. He escorted them to his room, and, as they revealed their identity, acted the part of an innocent and indignant man to perfection.

He produced his passport and business letters, and declared that he was an American citizen engaged upon perfectly legitimate business. Fitch knew too

much to be bluffed, however, and in spite of protests he had both the man and the room efficiently searched.

But here the inspector struck a snag. The only things that were in the slightest degree incriminating were two or three packets of smooth writing-paper, of a kind suitable for invisible writing. Now that sort of notepaper is not at all uncommon, and Fitch felt that it might be a very slender circumstance to support any charge. If there had been any sign of invisible ink itself, that would have been a different matter. The inspector had a moment of doubt.

"There was nothing in his baggage," he said, "nor anywhere inside or outside the room. If he had invisible ink it was well hidden. My eye swept round to the dressing-table. There were his razor, his tooth-brushes and hair-brushes, and a small bottle containing a yellow fluid—hair-oil or something similar.

" 'What is in this bottle?' I asked the spy.

" 'Oh, that's just some oil I rub on my face before I powder after a shave,' he replied.

"But the stuff was sticky. At Scotland Yard it was found to be the very ink used for the spy's invisible writing."

So far so good. The ink seemed likely to clinch the matter so far as Rowland was concerned. Now, it was time to rope in Mrs. Wertheim. A wire was sent to Aberdeen, where she had last been seen, but she had vanished before the police could act upon it. Fitch took up the trail in London. Five days after Rowland's arrest, he located her at a house in Regent's Park Road. It was eleven o'clock at night when he called upon her, and all the exercise of the

detective's tact was insufficient to induce her to see him alone. She insisted on receiving him in the company of two women friends.

To his request that she should accompany him to Scotland Yard she demurred with artistic indignation, and, as he persisted, grew angry, till she was screaming almost at the top of her voice. "This is outrageous. A lady like myself dragged out of her home at this time of night."

Nevertheless, she had to go. The two were put under examination at Scotland Yard, but the woman proved to be of sterner and more indomitable stuff than the man. "She declined to sit still in her chair," wrote Sir Basil Thomson, "but walked up and down the room, flirting a large silk handkerchief, as if she was practising a new dancing step." Little was got from her. She declared fiercely that she was a British subject and had a perfect right to travel where she liked.

Rowland—or Breeckow, as I may as well call him now—was different. It came as a shock to him to realize how much the Special Branch knew. He was the son of a pianoforte manufacturer in Stettin, and he himself was a pianist of some talent. He had been in America for six or seven years before the war, and had returned to Germany when hostilities began. At Antwerp he had been trained as a spy, supplied with a bogus United States passport, and sent to England. This passport helped to betray him, for the American Eagle on the official seal had its claws turned round the wrong way.

After some time in prison, Breeckow broke down.

"I have carried the secret long enough," he declared. "Now, I want to tell the whole truth." So it was that he wrote a confession.

The two were put on trial at the Old Bailey, and both were found guilty. The man was sentenced to death, and Mrs. Wertheim, who was held to have acted under his influence, to ten years' penal servitude.

The nerve of Breeckow utterly gave way after he was under sentence. He was little better than a madman during the five weeks which passed before the sentence was carried into effect. On the morning that he was to be shot at the Tower of London, he was almost in a state of collapse. He was a terror-stricken man when he was taken before the firing party, and shrieked for mercy.

At his own request a woman's handkerchief was used to bind his eyes. It was a curious fact that he was not killed by the volley from the rifles of the soldiers. He was dead before the bullets reached him. The doctors said that it was heart failure, or, in plain English, that he died of fright.

Mrs. Wertheim was sent to the women's convict prison at Aylesbury. Her mind gave way, and she was removed to Broadmoor, where she died a year or so after the war.

CHAPTER XX

THE CUT-DOWN HAT

ANY person privileged to examine the annals of Scotland Yard might marvel, not that the London detectives sometimes fail, but that they so often succeed. Again and again these men, not over well paid, have from the flimsiest facts, and in the face of incredible obstacles, brought home beyond the shadow of a doubt the guilt of some person who might well have considered himself safe from all human justice.

In the traditions of the Yard, few names stand higher than that of Detective-Inspector Tanner, one of the old school of shrewd, dogged detectives, who built up the reputation of the service long before the Criminal Investigation Department came into being.

It was while Tanner was still a sergeant that he came into notice by one of the prettiest pieces of investigation that are on record. An old woman, named Mrs. Elmsley, had been found murdered at her house in Grove Road, Stepney. She was a miserly old person who owned much house property, and made a habit of collecting her weekly rents in person. She lived alone, and was at times assisted in her rent collecting by a neighbour, a cobbler named Emms. She had also in her employ a man, who had been a constable in a provincial police force, named Mullins. He had some knowledge of plastering and bricklaying, and he kept the cottages owned by Mrs. Elmsley in

repair. These were the only two people with whom she was known to have any intimate association.

One Monday evening, she returned from her rent collecting expedition carrying a black bag heavy with coin. That was the last day she was seen alive. Callers at her house could get no response, and on the Friday the police were called by Emms. Then, it was found that Mrs. Elmsley had been murdered and robbed. A reward of three hundred pounds was shortly after offered for the detection of the murderer.

Nearly a month went by. Tanner could lay hold of nothing on which he felt it wise to act, although he had some clearly defined suspicions. Mullins, as one who had been a police officer, was anxious to help, and Tanner did not discourage him.

There came a day when Mullins called upon Tanner. "The game is in our hands," he declared triumphantly. "I know the man."

"Yes? Who is he?" asked Tanner.

Mullins explained that since the murder he had been working steadily to find some clue. He had kept a close eye upon Emms, and had seen him more than once pay stealthy visits to a brickfield near his cottage. That very morning, according to Mullins, he had seen Emms take a parcel from the brickfield and return to his cottage. After ten minutes he emerged with a smaller parcel which he placed in a disused shed close by.

Tanner took this story down in writing, and promised that he would have a look at the shed the following day.

"Don't go without me," said Mullins.

"Of course not," agreed the detective.

"I'll make it all right for you," said Mullins significantly. He accepted the abrupt nod of the other as an understanding that the reward would be sliced.

The next morning Tanner, with some other police officers and Mullins, visited Emms. They made a search of the shed without revealing anything, but it is conceivable that Tanner, for reasons of his own, did not look very hard. Mullins was indignant.

"You haven't half searched," he asserted. "Look behind that d—d slab."

He was obeyed, and a parcel was plucked out. It was tied with a piece of tape and a dirty apron-string. Within the outer wrapping was another parcel secured with a piece of waxed cord such as cobblers use. Inside this were some spoons, a cheque, and other articles that formed part of the stolen property.

Emms was dumbfounded, and at once protested his innocence. "Are you satisfied?" demanded Mullins of the detective.

"Quite," agreed Tanner quietly. "I arrest you, George Mullins, on suspicion of having murdered Mrs. Elmsley."

I should imagine that this was probably one of the most dramatic arrests on record. Emms was also detained, Tanner explaining that in the circumstances he would have to hold him for a while. But he was very shortly released as the evidence of Mullins' guilt accumulated.

Tanner had found people who had seen Mullins leaving the dead woman's house at about the time that the murder had been committed. A plasterer's

hammer was found at Mullins' house, which microscopical examination proved to be stained with blood. A piece of tape similar to that used to tie the parcel was found on the mantelshelf of Mullins' room, as well as a piece of cobbler's wax. An old boot picked up under the window of his room corresponded with a bloodstained footprint on the floor of one of Mrs. Elmsley's rooms, and two nails corresponded with two holes in the board. It was on this evidence that Mullins was convicted and hanged.

Some four years later, Tanner was associated with a murder investigation which, for a time, made him the best-known detective on two continents. At ten o'clock one night there came the news that the body of a murdered man had been found near the railway bridge at Victoria Park. Almost immediately afterwards it was reported that a first-class compartment in a train that had reached Hackney from Fenchurch Street was stained with blood, and bore marks of a fierce struggle. In the carriage were found a hat, stick, and bag.

Night and day are alike to Scotland Yard in affairs of this kind. Tanner, now an inspector, was put in charge of the case, and promptly got to work. The victim of the outrage was, in fact, not dead when he was picked up, but he was unconscious, and died within twenty-four hours. A bundle of letters in his pocket quickly established his identity. He was a Mr. Briggs, the seventy-year-old chief clerk of a banking firm, who lived at Hackney. He had been attacked on his way home, and all the signs pointed to a desperate and deadly struggle. Had the science of

fingerprints been understood in those days, Tanner's duty would have been much simplified, for there was the bloody imprint of a hand on the brasswork of the windows. But as it was, this helped little. Tanner had to content himself with such other facts as were within his reach.

The bag and stick were recognized as belonging to Briggs. His gold watch and chain were gone, as well as his gold eyeglasses. The murderer had overlooked a matter of five pounds which were found in the dead man's pockets. The thing, however, which interested Tanner most was the hat which had been left behind. It was not the tall hat which Briggs had been known to wear on the day of his death. It was a black beaver hat, something after the style of a tall hat, but much lower in the crown. It bore within the name of the makers, a firm in Marylebone.

Unless some chance intervened Tanner knew that he must pin his faith to this hat. There was no other clue to the murderer. He made inquiries of the makers, but they were unable to say to whom they might have sold that particular hat. For the moment it looked like what the detectives call a dead case. But Tanner had pertinacity, and he was not easily discouraged.

In the usual way every jeweller and pawnbroker was sent a circular describing the missing articles of jewellery. This list came into the hands of a man bearing the peculiar name of Death, who kept a jeweller's shop in Cheapside. He recalled that two days after the murder a thin, sallow-faced man, apparently a German, had exchanged a gold chain

with him for a chain of a different pattern and a ring.

Eagerly Tanner bent his mind to this fresh clue. The chain was undoubtedly that taken from the body of Mr. Briggs. The detective had, at least, some vague idea of the man for whom he was searching.

But for the time nothing happened. All his efforts seemed to be leading nowhere. He called in the aid of the Press, but still without result. Then there entered into the drama a cabman by the name of Matthews. While all London was talking of the crime, while the newspapers were printing columns of speculation and fantasy concerning it, he had heard nothing. It was only in the course of casual conversation with another cabman on the rank that some detail of the crime reached him. Then he remembered that he had seen in his own house, a few days previously, a jeweller's cardboard box bearing the name of Death.

This came to Tanner's ears, and within an hour he was following up the fragile scent. Luck was with him. He found that the cardboard box had been presented to one of Matthews' daughters by a young man who had lodged with the cabman. This was a man called Franz Muller. Muller, it appeared, was a young German tailor, who, a few days after the murder, had embarked on a sailing-ship for New York.

The Inspector felt that at last he was upon a red-hot scent. But there was more to come. He questioned the cabman closely. Muller had at one time been engaged to the latter's daughter, but the engagement had been broken off. Before that, however, Muller had presented his fiancée with a photograph

of himself. The portrait was turned up, and the detective promptly took possession of it.

Then Tanner led the conversation to the question of hats. Matthews was wearing one similar to that found in the railway carriage, and it appeared that Muller had so much admired it that he had asked the cabman to get him one.

"Where did you buy it?" demanded the detective. "Would you know it again?"

Matthews gave the name of the firm in Marylebone. He declared that he would know the hat that he had bought for Muller, because he had had the sides a little more turned up than usual. When the hat was produced for his inspection, he, without hesitation, vouched for its identity.

To such a man as Tanner this was more than enough to act upon. He set to work to find out what ship Muller had sailed with, and when it would arrive in New York. This part of the case bears a close resemblance to the chase made by Chief Detective-Inspector Dew to overtake Crippen in the *Montrose*.

Tanner found that the *Victoria*, upon which Muller had embarked, would not reach America for nearly six weeks. The suspect had five days' start, but there was ample time to overhaul him and be in New York by the time he arrived. Accompanied by another detective, and taking with him Death and Matthews to identify the quarry, he hurriedly took train to Liverpool, and caught a steamer which landed the party in the United States long before the slow sailing-ship was due to arrive.

It must have been an anxious wait for the detectives. There was no wireless in those days, and though all the indications pointed to their man being on the *Victoria*, they could not feel absolute certainty. As the time of arrival drew near an eager watch was kept on all sailing-ships approaching New York, and as the reason for the presence of the police officers was known, there was a large degree of public interest in their vigil.

Indeed, it might well have been that their attempt to take the fugitive alive would fail, for, as the *Victoria* did eventually draw near to New York Harbour, a party on an excursion steamer shouted for "Muller the murderer." Luckily, he did not hear them, and so was not tempted to take an obvious avenue of escape by committing suicide.

A small boat put out from the shore and boarded the vessel. Two men passed up the accommodation ladder—Detective-Inspector Tanner and an officer of the New York police.

There was a short conversation with the captain, and then all the steerage passengers were ordered aft for medical examination. As they were gathering, Tanner and his colleague closed on their prey. The Inspector gripped him by the arm, and Muller turned angrily upon him. "We are police officers," said the New York detective. "You are wanted for the murder of Mr. Briggs."

Pale and agitated, Muller protested his innocence of the crime. He was taken to a cabin, and while he remained under guard there his box was searched. In it were found the watch that had belonged to the

THE CUT-DOWN HAT

murdered man, and the missing hat. The latter had been cut down an inch and a half and sewn together again. For many years afterwards a sort of dwarf top-hat that was in favour was known as the "Muller Cut-down."

Both the hat and watch, Muller asserted when questioned, were his own property. He had been possessed of the watch for two years, and had owned the hat for about a year. Tanner accepted this explanation with a short nod, but no doubt held to his own opinion.

A stubborn fight was made to prevent extradition, but the facts were too plain. Within a few days Muller was handed over to the British detectives to be escorted to England. It is no part of my purpose here to do more than make passing reference to the extraordinary scenes that marked his arrival at both Liverpool and Euston Station, where great crowds assembled to catch a glimpse of him. He was taken in a cab to Bow Street, and charged. Relieved of his duty as escort Tanner was once more free to fill in any gaps in the evidence that he had so far obtained.

These cases are like a jigsaw puzzle. Once a start is made the other pieces fall into their places with comparative ease. It was possible now to construct a theory of the murder, backed by strong circumstantial evidence, which was practically that presented by the Solicitor-General at the trial.

It was scarcely a murder of premeditation according to Tanner's view. Muller, he believed, had noticed the watch and chain on the dozing passenger, and temptation and opportunity had presented themselves

simultaneously. A weapon was at hand in Mr. Briggs' stick, "a formidable weapon, large, heavy, with a handle at one end."

Now Muller had lodgings near Victoria Park. He had been out of work for a week and was short of money. On the night of the murder, he had gone out at half-past seven and had not returned at one o'clock in the morning. Two days later he was at Death's, the jeweller's. After that Tanner traced his movements with minuteness. By pawning certain articles—including the chain he had exchanged with Death—and by borrowing money, he had raised enough cash for his passage to America.

The judge at the trial thus described the web which had been woven. "One may describe circumstantial evidence as a network of facts cast around the accused man. That network may be a mere gossamer thread, as light and insubstantial as the air itself, which would vanish at a touch. It may be strong in parts, but leave great gaps and rents through which the accused is entitled to pass with safety. It may be so close, so stringent, so coherent in its texture, that no efforts on the part of the accused could break it."

Some of the ablest men of the Criminal Bar of England were engaged for the defence. Germans of wealth and influence used money and interest on behalf of the prisoner. For two days the trial at the Old Bailey was fought out. But there was no breaking down the case which had been built against Muller. The jury took just a quarter of an hour to consider their verdict, and the little tailor was sentenced to death.

The case, as I have said, aroused extraordinary interest among Germans. The strongest efforts were made to save Muller from the scaffold. The King of Prussia and some of the smaller German Royalties telegraphed to the Queen on his behalf. The German newspapers saw in the sentence the venting of a petty spite against their nation. A memorial to the Home Secretary was presented by Germans in England. But all this was in vain.

Sensation was carried to the very scaffold. A German minister who was attending the condemned man persisted in an effort to obtain a confession to the very last moment. Immediately before the drop fell this conversation took place :

The Minister : " Muller, in a few moments you will stand before God. I ask you again, and for the last time, are you guilty or not guilty ?"

Muller : " Not guilty."

The Minister : " You are not guilty ?"

Muller : " God knows what I have done."

The Minister : " God knows what you have done. Does he also know that you have committed this crime ?"

Muller : " Yes, I have done it " (" Ja, ich habe es gethan ").

It was questioned later whether Muller had actually used the words ascribed to him ; but the records seem to leave no doubt of his confession. It is, at any rate, satisfactory that the cruelty of cross-examining a man at the instant of death has never been permitted since.

CHAPTER XXI

SOME DETECTIVE ANECDOTES

LUCK being an element of all human affairs it follows that there are occasions when it comes to the aid of the detective. It is easy, however, to exaggerate the part played by luck, or chance, in many of these affairs. So much depends upon the definition of luck. It is notorious that in most games luck follows the skilful player.

Some years ago the then head of the Paris detective force came to London to enlist aid in running down a swindler who had long eluded the resources of the French Sûreté. By pure coincidence, a couple of C.I.D. officers came face to face with the wanted man in the Strand an hour or so after they had been warned to keep an eye lifting for him. The quickness of the arrest was the merest fluke, but, naturally, Scotland Yard did not emphasize that in handing the man over. I have an idea that the Sûreté completely turned the tables a little later by producing a man asked for by Scotland Yard straight away out of a police station cell, where he had been detained as a suspicious character.

A singular piece of luck fell to the lot of a Scotland Yard man some years ago. It was suspected that an absconding bank cashier would probably try to leave England by a certain liner. A detective, whom I will call Smith, was provided with a description, and set

off down to Southampton to intercept the fugitive. As the passengers passed up the gangway to the boat, he scrutinized them closely, and came to the conclusion that a certain individual was his man.

The suspect, with much indignation, protested that a mistake had been made. Smith shrugged his shoulders. "Very well. If you are not X and can prove it, you have nothing to fear. In that case, I presume you will have no objection to my looking through your luggage?"

The other paled, stuttered, fumed, and declared that he would never submit to such an outrage. No conduct could have been more calculated to make the officer determined. He searched the luggage, and in a small handbag he discovered hidden away a large amount of money. Triumphant, he conducted his prisoner ashore, and had him locked up at the nearest police station.

Then he telephoned to his superior officer: "I've got X."

"No you haven't," was the startling reply. "We've got him here. He was arrested at King's Cross half an hour ago."

Utterly bewildered, Smith told of the compromising facts that had convinced him. There was silence for a while. Then the voice at the other end of the wire said quietly: "Oh, that's all right. We shall want the fellow you've got. He is Y, a rate-collector who made a bolt from Glasgow, and for whom the local police have been looking quite a while."

There was a pretty little story published in the newspapers about 1923, which the reader may accept

or not, as he chooses. It is said to have happened in Denmark. A certain workman disappeared for a period of several years, and even his very intimate friends lost sight of him. Then a series of well-written stories of criminal adventure were issued by one of the best-known Danish publishing houses. It became known that the talented author was no other than the workman who had been missing for so long.

All went well until a detective, in reading one of the stories, saw in it a set of facts, which, well wrapped up in a nice literary setting, coincided with those of a crime which had never been solved.

He collected the works of the new writer, and went through them carefully, comparing some of the exploits described with some of the unsolved mysteries recorded in the police archives. The result of this was that the writer was arrested and tried for some of the crimes—and that he confessed to others.

There are several morals to be discovered in the next story. The disposition of valuable property is frequently one of the most delicate problems which a criminal has to meet. Not one crook in a hundred, if he suddenly became possessed of the Crown Jewels, would know how to raise more than a comparatively trivial sum upon them. The big receivers, generally speaking, only deal with the big thieves—and only with those that they know well. No stranger would have a chance with them.

A year or two back a postman, Albert R——, was sentenced, at the Old Bailey, to five years' penal servitude for stealing ninety-five thousand pounds' worth of money and securities. This man had managed to lay

his hands on two registered mail-bags from a Lombard Street delivery van. With these he disappeared, making most elaborate plans to cover his tracks. Many old hands in crime would have cheerfully spent a year or more in planning such a coup. Included in the haul were cheques to the value of £81,572, coupons worth £19,000, and bills to the value of £3,676. All of these he burnt, retaining only the actual cash he had obtained, to the amount of £2,500.

After his disappearance, there began an interesting piece of detective work. On the day of the theft, he did not return to his home, although, of course, a close watch was kept. Detectives were in close touch with banks and other places where it was thought attempts might be made to dispose of the loot.

Then one day, a post office detective heard one postman remark to another that someone had told him that R—— had taken a room over a barber's shop in Stamford Street, Blackfriars. There are not many barbers' shops in Stamford Street, and the officers soon found the place.

But the room was empty. Nothing was left behind but the half-burned mail-bags and a few charred cheques. The only other clue was that in the barber's shop, R—— had had his moustache shaved off.

The search for the missing man covered a wide field. Some of the stolen notes began to trickle back to the Bank of England, and these were discovered to have come chiefly from racecourses. It was among the habitués of these places that the fugitive was looked for. At last, he was found with a number of racing men at a London public-house, where he was

known as Jack Davis. This was less than a month after the theft. All that he had left was seventeen pounds, but a barmaid had been asked to look after a parcel for him, which was found to contain stolen notes to the value of £350. That was all that remained of a £95,000 haul.

A striking list might be made of odd points which have served to disclose a crime or trace a criminal. There was a French thief who left a trail of attar of roses by which he was followed. In another case, a French rogue was tracked down by a sort of paper-chase.

Some £6,000 worth of stamps had vanished from the Stamps and Registration Office. A day or two later, a M. Noiret noticed his son putting an unused three hundred franc stamp in his album. This stamp, the boy said, he had found on the Alfortville Bridge. Passing over the bridge in his motor-car the following day, M. Noiret was astonished, when he drew up, to see a similar stamp sticking to one of his tyres.

The matter was brought to the attention of the police, who traced an employé of the Stamps Bureau, living at Alfortville. This man at last confessed that he had taken the stamps, and, having found he could not sell them, wrapped them in an old newspaper and dropped them over the bridge. Several, however, had been caught by the wind and had fallen in the roadway.

An interesting story has been recorded by Mr. Arthur Train. "A watchman was murdered, the safe of a brewery blown open, and the contents stolen. Local detectives worked on the case and satisfied

themselves that the night engineer at the brewery had committed the crime. He was a quiet, and apparently a God-fearing, man, but circumstances were conclusive against him. In fact, he had been traced within ten minutes of the murder on the way to the scene of the homicide. But some little link was lacking, and the brewery officials called in the agency. The first thing the superintendent did was to look over the engineer. *At first sight, he recognized him as a famous crook who had served five years for a homicidal assault!* One would think that would have settled the matter. But it didn't! The detective said nothing to his associates or employers, but called on the engineer that evening and had a quiet talk with him, in which he satisfied himself that the man was *entirely innocent*. The man had served his time, turned over a new leaf, and was leading an honest, decent life. Two months later the superintendent caused the arrest of four yeggmen, all of whom were convicted, and are now serving fifteen years each for the crime."

The methods of detectives vary in different countries. In France, for example, efforts are frequently made to trick a suspect into an admission, and at times a great deal of ingenuity is exercised in this way. A man, named Raoul, was arrested in connection with a robbery, and a guard was placed in a cell with him. Presently, Raoul fell asleep, and on awakening observed that his companion was concluding the writing of a lengthy document. Raoul's interest was aroused, and he asked a question. It was explained that while he was asleep he had made a confession and it had been taken down. The officer read the facts out in

circumstantial detail, and Raoul listened in consternation, without the least suspicion that the whole thing was an elaborate trap. He was surprised into admitting his connection with the crime, and, under the impression that he could do himself no further harm, signed a confession.

One of the grimmest anecdotes of detective service ever told has been recorded by the late Sir Robert Anderson, who was for many years head of the Criminal Investigation Department.

“Of all the London horrors of that time, none ever made a greater sensation than the Waterloo Bridge murder of 1857. One evening, on one of the buttresses of the bridge a carpet-bag was found, containing mutilated fragments of a human body. The evidence given at the inquest made it clear that a foul and brutal murder had been committed, but no clue could be discovered to the identity of either the victim or the assassins. . . .

“The victim was an Italian police agent who had been sent to London on a special mission. Posing as a revolutionist, he put up at a house in Cranbourn Street, Soho, frequented by Italians of that class. Revolutionists are proverbially suspicious of one another, and a glaring indiscretion cost the man his life. He not only preserved a letter of instructions about his work, but carried it in his pocket; and this letter his companions got hold of by searching his clothes when he was asleep. As he mounted the stairs the next night in company with some of his fellow lodgers, he received a blow on the head that stunned him, and his body was dragged to the basement.

There he recovered consciousness, but a brief struggle was quickly ended by the use of the assassins' knives. They proceeded to cut up the body, and several nights were spent in efforts to get rid of the remains by burning them. This, however, proved a tedious and irksome task, and it was decided to jettison the rest of the corpse in the river."

CHAPTER XXII

CLASSIC PIECES OF DETECTION

NOT every crime calls for any special detective effort in its elucidation. The majority of those great murder cases which are familiar to the public have, in fact, resolved themselves into the collating of more or less plain evidence—really a matter for lawyers rather than police officers. It is only in exceptional cases that detective skill is taxed.

Even in the wide publicity obtained in some of these matters, the part played by the detective is not properly shown. A complete picture is displayed to the court. How it was made is not often of any legal consequence. It is only between the lines that the labour and acumen brought into play by the investigators is disclosed.

A strange business was that of Neill Cream. Towards the end of 1891, Scotland Yard was consulted by Dr. Broadbent, an eminent physician, in regard to a letter he had received. This charged him with having poisoned a girl, named Matilda Clover, and the writer, who signed himself "Malone," demanded £2,500 to hush the matter up. Communication was to be made through the personal column of a newspaper. The Criminal Investigation Department regarded this letter as that of a madman, and made some attempt to trap him. The effort was unsuccessful, and the matter dropped.

At two o'clock on the morning of April 12, 1892, a police-constable saw a girl let a man out of one of the houses in Stamford Street, Blackfriars. The light of a street lamp enabled him to note that this man was about forty years old, had a heavy moustache, and was wearing glasses. He had on a silk hat and a dark overcoat. Three-quarters of an hour later this girl and another, both in terrible agony, had to be taken by the police from the house to a hospital. One girl, whose name was Marsh, died in the cab. The other, Emma Shrivell, lingered long enough to explain that the man seen by the constable had given each of them "three long pills" (capsules), which they had taken.

At first, it was imagined that these women had died from ptomaine poisoning caused by eating bad tinned salmon. But it was speedily shown that their deaths were due to strychnine.

Inspector George Harvey, of the L Division, at once threw officers on an inquiry among girls of a certain reputation. All that was known at the moment was that the man who had given the capsules was called "Fred," and that he had told the girls he was a doctor. The constable who had seen the man leave the house ran across him again, and the suspect, who called himself Dr. Neill, and had lodgings in Lambeth, was put under quiet surveillance. But there was another man, a lodger at the Stamford Street house, who had also seen "Fred." He was afforded a glimpse of Dr. Neill, and was positive that he was not the poisoner.

Neill was, therefore, left alone for a while and other avenues of inquiry were followed up. Thus, a girl was

found who had known a man corresponding to the general description of the murderer in company with Matilda Clover. The records of Somerset House showed that Clover was supposed to have died of delirium tremens, but when the body was exhumed it was shown that she had been killed by strychnine. By a curious chance, the certificate immediately preceding this in the book was that of a girl named Donworth, who had died mysteriously of strychnine poisoning seven days before Clover. She was later found to have been a victim of the man with the glasses.

The murder of Clover was at once linked with the blackmailing letter to Dr. Broadbent. In working backwards, the police found that blackmailing letters in regard to Donworth had been sent to a member of the great newspaper distributing firm of W. H. Smith and Sons. Still another letter, to a Dr. Harper, accused his son of the murders of Marsh and Shrivell.

It was now obvious that a sexual maniac was engaged in wholesale poisoning operations in London. Detective-Inspector J. B. Tunbridge, of Scotland Yard, was ordered to take up the case, and warnings were issued to the women of the class likely to be his future victims. The blackmailing letters were examined, and were found to be in apparently different handwritings. This complicated matters.

A singular fact came to the knowledge of Tunbridge. Dr. Neill had quite accidentally made the acquaintance of a former private inquiry agent, and to this man he made some curious statements, among them a reiteration of the accusation against Dr. Harper's son.

About this time it happened that another Scotland

Yard man, Detective-Sergeant M'Intyre, was brought into touch with Neill. The introduction was a pure accident, and detective and murderer became very friendly, so that they were almost constantly together, and M'Intyre had the run of the other's lodgings. He even asked Neill his opinion of the series of deaths, in which the other admitted that, "as a medical man," he took an interest. Neill also complained to his new friend that he was being followed by the police, and asked his advice.

By a ruse, M'Intyre got a specimen of the suspect's handwriting. He also found that some of the many letters that had been sent out were in the handwriting of a young woman to whom Neill was engaged. He also procured a piece of the writing paper used by Neill, which was of American manufacture and watermarked "Fairfield—Superfine Quality."

The letter written to Dr. Harper was found to have been on similar paper, and in the same handwriting. Tunbridge hesitated no longer. He applied for a warrant, and Neill, who had already booked his passage to the United States, was arrested on a charge of attempted blackmail. The rest was mainly a question of identification. One dramatic instant was when one girl named Harvey, whom Neill believed to be dead, denounced him as a man who had tried to induce her to swallow a "long pill."

It became known later that this man, whose real name was Thomas Neill Cream, had been guilty of at least three murders in America, and it is probable that at least half a dozen Englishwomen suffered at his hands. The problem of ensuring a conviction was

not at all easy, even after he had been arrested, but he was finally convicted and sentenced to death.

The United States has had a fair share of notable detectives, among them none more distinctive than Joseph Petrosino, of the New York Detective Department, an Italian by birth, who was unrivalled in the investigation of certain types of crime. I will borrow a description of him from Mr. Arthur Train.

“ He was short and heavy, with enormous shoulders and a bull neck, on which was placed a great round head like a summer squash. His face was pockmarked, and he talked with a deliberation that was due to his desire for accuracy, but which at times might have been suspected to arise from some other cause. He rarely smiled, and went methodically about his business, which was to drive the Italian criminals out of the city and country. Of course, being a marked man in more senses than one, it was practically impossible to disguise himself, and accordingly he had to rely upon his own investigations and detective powers, supplemented by the efforts of the trained men in the Italian branch, many of whom are detectives of a high order of ability. If the life of Petrosino were to be written, it would be a book unique in the history of criminology and crime, for this man was probably the only great detective in the world to find his career in a foreign country amid criminals of his own race.”

In a lonely part of Van Cortlandt Park, the body of a man who had been stabbed to death was found. The pockets were empty save for a cigar band and a pencilled slip of paper : “ Sabbatto Gizzi, P. O. Box 239, Lambertville, New Jersey.”

Petrosino traced out Gizzi, who identified the body as that of Tony Torsielli, who had left Lambertville a few days before in company with another Italian, named Antonio Strollo. Strollo, when questioned, was frank about the trip. Torsielli had been seeking for a long lost brother, and at Strollo's suggestion had advertised. To this there had come an answer, and Strollo, acting as Tony's amanuensis (for the latter could not write), had made an appointment to meet at Yonkers, where the brother was supposed to be living. Drawing his savings from the bank, Torsielli, accompanied by Strollo, had set off to meet his brother. The two brothers had met in the neighbourhood of Van Cortlandt Park, and there Strollo had left them together.

Strollo was quite willing to go to identify the body, and in the train to New York, Petrosino noticed that he had an injury to his hand. The other explained that he had received it in a brawl with a drunken man, and this incidentally led to the disclosure that on the night of the murder he had slept at an hotel at Mott Street, New York, under an assumed name, "because his own was difficult for an American to write." His suspicions now fully alight, Petrosino arrested the other immediately he had identified the body. In the pocket of the prisoner was found a stamped letter, in his own handwriting, ostensibly from Tony Torsielli to his brother. But curiously it was in an envelope addressed to Tony himself. The stamp had been cancelled, not in Yonkers, but in Lambertville.

Strollo was found to be wounded in the knee as well as the hand, and the wounds were of the same nature,

and apparently inflicted by the same instrument, as those on the dead man. At the hotel in Mott Street, there was no word of any trouble, but the bedclothes of the room in which Strollo had slept were stained with blood.

From these facts, Petrosino argued that the supposed brother had been invented by Strollo, and that he had carried on the correspondence on both sides to delude and entrap Tony. A detective was introduced into prison as a fellow criminal, and became intimate with Strollo. When the latter was removed to another prison and charged with the murder, he wrote several letters to his "friend," in which he sought help in manufacturing a false alibi. Strollo was convicted and executed in 1908.

Another Italian detective of outstanding ability was Cavaliere Domenico Cappa, some time the head of the detective service in Turin. He won his spurs by running down the authors of a series of murders in the neighbourhood of Turin, who for months had completely baffled every effort of detection. The victims had in each case been killed and robbed on the highway.

Cappa was brought into the investigation when a carter, who had been carrying a load of washing from Turin to an adjacent village, disappeared. Not only had the man vanished, but his horse and cart as well. The only reason for the presumption of murder was a pool of blood by the roadside.

A search about the spot led to little till Cappa discovered footprints in the soft clay of a ditch bordering the road. Disregarding the scoffing scepticism of a

colleague, he jumped into the ditch and carefully measured the footprints.

"I make out that there were two people engaged in this business," he said. "These measures are entirely different and belong to two distinct kinds of feet. This boot is broad and long; the heel is low, nearly flat, and it has the mark of a diamond made of nails. It is the footstep, in short, of someone more accustomed to the fields than the pavement—a strong, tall, vigorous person. The other footstep is quite the opposite. The foot is small, slender, aristocratic almost. The heel is high, curved in, and without nails. It is the boot of a town resident. At least, this proves that there were two of them."

His companion could not see that the prints were necessarily those of the murderers, and to his arguments, Cappa could only reply that their proximity to the pool of blood was good presumptive evidence.

For the time, however, nothing came of Cappa's clue, and, in fact, two more murders took place before anything happened. Then one day, Cappa chanced upon a man who hinted that he knew something. Over a bottle of wine, this acquaintance was induced to tell of two men, bad characters both, with whom he had some conversation during a drunken orgy at a tavern. The talk had turned on the murders, and the remark was passed that the criminals were too astute for the police. "That is what I say," remarked one of the men, "but Antonio is always in a fright." At a significant glance from his brother he checked himself, but later, under the influence of wine, he again remarked that they had sold a horse and cart at a

certain village near the spot where the carter had vanished.

Some attempt was made to get Cappa's informant to accompany the men home, but he concocted a story of the arrest of men suspected of the murders, and so diverted their attention sufficiently to escape. A day or two later, one of the brothers had indignantly accused him of being a police spy, and was only pacified after many protestations.

Cappa learned that the names of these men were Gian Battista Garesio and Antonio Garesio. He made it his business to find out more about them. He was particularly interested in the kind of boots they wore. He discovered that Gian Battista was a big man, with rural interests, while Antonio, who was the physical opposite, a small man, lived much in town.

Before he was ready to act, Antonio was captured on another charge, for which he was sentenced to a term in prison. Satisfied that this suspect was safe for the time being, Cappa concentrated on Gian, whom he at last met by a clever ruse while the other was wandering about the country.

Now, Gian was a powerful and desperate man, and there was no doubt that he would have violently resisted arrest for murder. So Cappa pretended to mistake him for one Gosio, who was wanted for burglary. The murderer, knowing that he could easily disassociate his identity from that of Gosio, willingly went to the police station. There he was ordered to take off his boots, and the diamond in nails upon the heels was at once shown. The measurements of the boots also corresponded with those that Cappa had taken. So

also did the boots of Antonio agree with the second set of footprints.

At the house of Gian some of the stolen goods were found, and the purchasers of the horse and cart identified the prisoners as the men who had sold them. On this evidence a conviction was obtained, and Gian was executed, while his brother was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Among the remarkable feats that must be placed to the credit of French detectives, that of the capture of Georges Lacenaire, which happened nearly a hundred years ago, has features of high interest. A bank clerk visited, by appointment, the apartment of a man calling himself Mahossier to collect money due on bills of exchange. This room was located at the top of four flights of stairs, and the only indication of its tenant was the name "Mahossier" scribbled in chalk on the door panels. As the clerk—a young man of eighteen—knocked, the door opened, and he was set upon by two men. Although at the first onslaught he received a stab in the back, the young clerk put up a stout resistance, and, fearful that his cries would attract attention, his assailants fled, leaving him still in possession of a wallet containing ten thousand francs, which was the evident object of their attack.

M. Canler, one of the heads of the Paris detective force, was put in charge of the case. He found the room in which the attack had taken place completely bare except for two trusses of straw and a large basket with a deal board on top. The only thing was the handwriting on the door. As photography had not

come into use in those days, Canler impressed its character carefully on his mind, although he felt reasonably certain that the name itself was merely an alias. Then, with as full a description of the robbers as he could get, he began a search of the lodging-houses of Paris, all of which were by law compelled to keep a register of their tenants open to police inspection. After some days he found that a man, calling himself Mahossier, had slept at a *garni* in the Faubourg du Temple accompanied by an individual named Ficellier. The description of Mahossier tallied with that of the wanted man, and that of Ficellier struck a chord of recollection in the detective's mind. A little before, one François had been arrested for obtaining wine by fraud, and was still awaiting trial. Canler had no doubt that he and Ficellier were one and the same. He visited François in his cell.

"Tell me," he said abruptly, "why you went to Pageot's *garni* under the name of Ficellier?"

The other at once admitted the fact. "I knew there was a warrant out against me for this wine business," he said. "I wasn't going to be fool enough to give my own name for the police to see."

The natural inference was that François was an accomplice in the affair. Canler said nothing more at this stage, but went back to the Faubourg du Temple to pick up any further clues. In conversation with the lodging-house-keeper's wife, she mentioned that Mahossier had stayed before at the place under the name of Bâton.

The detective heard this with some astonishment, for Bâton was a gaol-bird well known to him, and,

moreover, he was not at all like the description that had been given of Mahossier. However, he was taking no chances, and in an hour or two Bâton was safely under lock and key. But the bank clerk and other witnesses could not swear to his identity and he was released.

Before this, however, Canler learned that Bâton had been on intimate terms with a certain Gaillard, whose description more nearly approached that of Mahossier. So when Bâton emerged from the Prefecture, Canler casually accompanied him on part of his way, and led the conversation round to this man. The talk more than ever convinced him that his surmise was right.

He concentrated then on finding Gaillard. This was not so easy, for the records showed at least a score of men under such a name, who had registered at lodging-houses in that name during the twelve previous months. At last, however, he found the right one. More than that, this Gaillard had left behind, amid a bundle of political songs, an insulting letter addressed to the Prefect of Police. Canler at once recognized the writing as similar to that chalked on the door of Mahossier's room, to which the bank clerk had been decoyed.

There, for a little, the case halted. Gaillard could not be found. A man named Avril, in prison for a minor crime, undertook to find Gaillard. For a week, accompanied by a detective, he roamed Paris without success. Meanwhile François had been constantly under interrogation, and, while under the escort of Canler, volunteered the information that Gaillard had

confessed to him a murder which had taken place about a fortnight before the attempt on the bank clerk, and which still remained a mystery. This had been the brutal killing of a man named Charden and his bedridden mother.

Hard upon this, Avril told the police that Gaillard had an aunt living in the Rue Bar-du-Bec. Canler called on this old lady, who replied to his inquiries through a trap let in the door. She admitted that she had a nephew, but his name was not Gaillard but Lacenaire, and he was a "thorough bad lot." She was suspicious that he had designs on her life, and for that reason had had the trap fixed in the door so that she might look her callers over. But of Lacenaire's whereabouts she had no notion.

So Lacenaire was sought for, but it was a mere fluke that brought about his arrest. News came to Canler that the man had been apprehended at Beaune while trying to pass a forged bill of exchange under the name of Levy Jacob. He was brought to Paris where he readily admitted that he had taken part in the attempted murder of the bank clerk. He displayed no more emotion than a merchant might over an operation that had gone astray. When told that he had been betrayed in connection with the Charden murder, he accepted the situation calmly and made a full confession. Systematic murder had been his trade for years, and yet he was a philosopher of some culture, and a poet of sorts. He refused to betray any of his associates, save François and Avril. While he was in gaol he became a sort of fashionable hero.

The bank clerk robbery which had started Canler

CLASSIC PIECES OF DETECTION

on his investigation never came into court. Lacenaire, Avril, and François were charged with the Charden murder and duly convicted. The two former suffered the extreme penalty, while François got off with penal servitude for life.

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